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HYDE MARSTON;

OR,

A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE.

BY CRAVEN.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1844.

LONDON:
P. SHOBERL, JUN., 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET,
PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT.

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CHAPTER I.

PARIS.

Voyager — Milford Haven — The Veteran : Rule Britannia — The sea, the sea! — A dream — Home, sweet home — Rather cloying — *Apropos* — “ The streamlet that flow’d by her cot ” — Slows — “ Aboard, aboard, the wind sits in the shoulder of your sail ” — The *salon de jeu* — Your money or your life — Dead for a ducat — A spice of the mystic.

“ Ours is a nation of travellers; and no wonder, when the elements, air, water, and fire, attend at our bidding, to transport us from shore to shore. . . . Men rush on danger, and even on death. Intrigue, play, foreign and domestic broil, such are their resources.”

ROGERS.

“ Nay, was it I who woo'd thee to this breast,
Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest,
As in repayment of the warmth it lent?
Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?
Did not thy love awaken mine?

SHELLEY's *Julian and Maddalo*.

HYDE MARSTON;
OR,
A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

“Voyager,” says Madame de Stael, “est, quoiqu’on puisse dire, un des plus tristes plaisirs de la vie.” The imaginative Frenchwoman never wrote a more palpable truism. As the distance that separates us from kindred, friends, or country, increases, we “drag at each remove a lengthening chain,” and when again we turn towards them, with how many anxieties, hopes, and fears, is the path strewn!

In the twilight of a glorious autumnal day,

a noble frigate was winning her silent course through the purple waters that the land-wind was now first awakening from repose. Every thread of canvass that could be set had been spread, to catch the few light “ catspaws ” which, during the day, visited us, with scarce the strength of lovers’ sighs.

Evening brought the breeze that sailors reckon upon at sundown ; and, as the gallant vessel gathered way, a joyous sound was the merry music of her bows, and a sight to stir the heart her wake, as it grew from the semblance of a drowsy brooklet to the likeness of a furrow of mountain snow. Our destination was Milford Haven, whither we bore despatches relative to the reception of His Majesty, whose intention it was to have made that port the place of his debarkation from Ireland.

I had the good fortune of an introduction to the captain, the veteran Sir A—— G——, who, upon learning that I was about to return to England, offered me a passage, with so cordial a good-will that a refusal would have been a discourtesy. All that a poet’s dream could

picture of a British sailor was realized in that fine old man: frank, free, open-handed and open-hearted, as if the wild element upon which he lived had absorbed all the harsh, cold properties of humanity, leaving behind a spirit influenced alone by chivalrous bravery and kindness.

All on board were busied with their several duties; the quarter-deck had no occupant but myself, save an officer who, with folded arms, paced and mused away his watch. The deep and dreamy stillness of all around was the more obvious, from the contrast it offered to the scenes in which the last few months had been passed.

There is, or was, a "whirl" in Irish life, if I may so express a routine of excitement that knew neither pause nor relaxation, infinitely more opposed to thought and reflection than any thing I have ever experienced elsewhere. In Paris, pleasure resembles the libations poured upon its altars—it is bright and brilliant as champagne, but with intervals serene as when the sparkling spirit passes from the

pride of the vineyard. In Dublin, fun and frolic are wild and burning as the whisky which

“ Now melts into softness, now maddens to crime.”

The royal visit, too, was the signal for an outbreak much more akin to ordinary frenzy than the mere manifestation of national hospitality and welcome.

With a heart replete with gratitude, and a head filled with far less agreeable sensations, I bade it adieu, and looked my last upon the hills thrown into relief by the crimson light that still lingered in the west ; then, rolling a boat-cloak about me, with a gun-carriage for a couch, I surrendered myself to the idle influence of the hour and the place. A deep sleep fell upon me. . . .

Scarce had the palpable world faded from my senses, than the ideal arose ; smiles its sunlight—peace and joy its ministers. There again was the home of my childhood ; its old, familiar faces beaming with kindness, and each accustomed haunt fair and fragrant with sum-

mer's choicest offspring. But even in visions my spirit was a wanderer; anon, my father's roof was in the distance, and I sought the spot for which my heart yearned. Once more on the lucid river my boat floated in the silver moonlight; again upon its flowery bank stood the two fair sisters. All was bright, and, alas! brief as "love's young dream," for a friendly hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a voice—that spoke of grog and devill'd biscuits—

"Call'd back reality, and broke the spell."

Soon after noon, on the following day, we made Milford Haven, and the captain's gig forthwith landed me, as befitted the guest of one who commanded a crack British frigate.

To find yourself on the Welsh coast, some twenty years ago, was a very different affair from being similarly situated in 1844. In the former era, the odds were that you underwent a three days' course of eggs and bacon, and an unknown tongue, as *the* coach only ran twice a week; in the present, you may get an

appetite in the morning on Penmaenmawr, and get rid of it the same evening at Mivart's or the Clarendon.

Even in that barbarous age, however, the savage population of the sea-board was tolerably enlightened as to the value of money. Having, with this potent agent, moved certain Taffies, ineffably odorous as regarded leeks, a machine drawn by a libel upon a horse, and driven by a mountain satyr, who neither had "the voice of Christian, Pagan, nor Jew," was procured, and bore me out of the town of Milford.

Truly has Byron defined the feelings that attend a return home ; — well has he said that —

" Singular emotions fill
Their bosoms, who have been induced to roam
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—
With love for many, and with fears for some."

Such, at least, were my sensations as once more I passed beneath the limes and beeches that formed the avenue to B——, and gazed anxiously at each member of its household

from whom I received a welcome. As far as any outward sign denoted, however, it might have been but the day before that I had taken my departure. All was the same, from the snowy tip of the master's pigtail to the sunset glow of the butler's nose. The establishment, "little dogs and all," was as I had left it, and, at the risk of being pronounced deficient in filial reverence, I must say uncommonly slow.

As there may be some who will hold my offence the greater, inasmuch as I have used a term not the most courtly, an anecdote, to prove the omnipotence of technical expression, will not be out of place here. A friend of mine, who loved nothing so well as cock-fighting, except his father, received intelligence that an untoward speculation had reduced his sire from affluence to comparative beggary. He flew to him on the instant, to offer consolation, and such aid as his condition permitted. I saw him upon his return, and inquired how his parent bore his loss? "He takes it," said my friend, "like a Chris-

tian, but (and here the tears started to his eyes) I am sorry to say he cuts out uncommonly white.”¹

I have never been a great “ Septembriser,” and, in my early days, had rather a repugnance to the circumvention of partridges. My father had a taste for Shakspeare, which, while it fitted him to be happy any where, with a volume of immortal Will. in his hand, wholly disqualified him from making a large empty country-house a spot to abide in. On the day after my return, I wandered to the cottage in which I had passed so many happy hours. The river still flowed in beauty by the green bank whereon it stood ; but the rank weed had overrun the once trim garden ; its walks were moss-grown ; its flowers bloomed not ; all bespoke a moral death ; the spirit of the place had departed !

Altogether, I contrived, in about a week, to become as miserable a dog as ever was candi-

¹ In “ cutting out” a cock for the pit, if he exhibit the white feather underneath, it is indicative of a want of courage.

date for a halter. The good old gentleman, albeit, in most instances, as blind to all that was passing around him as if there were no eyes behind his spectacles, was not long in finding out the true state of the case. Whether he was aware of my actual position in reference to Caroline G——, I could not discover. All allusion to the circumstance of her family having left the neighbourhood was avoided; indeed, when he did speak, which, as was his custom, occurred but seldom, the subjects were always of a general character.

At length, some ten days after my arrival, as we sat one evening over our wine, and I had come to a conclusion that it was not the sun's intention ever to set again, he broke silence to this effect—

“ Hyde, I have just had a letter from your uncle, who is in Paris. He purposes to return to England soon, but wishes you to join him there, and accompany him home. I think you had better do so.”

If the proposal had been that I should have finished the autumn at Sierra Leone, I would

have jumped at it : as it was, I felt like one released from limbo, and presented with a perpetual admission for Paradise.

What do you scowl at, you vinegar-visaged heathen? I'm unfilial, eh? I only wish I could give you a dose of B——, as it was on the occasion of my return from Ireland, and a week's serenade of its rooks. Worse I couldn't desire might befall the enemy of mankind himself.

We are a generation of vipers, and it *did* cross my imagination that such kindness must have an ulterior object ; but I smothered the unworthy suggestions of my baser nature, and prepared for a start, grateful for the chance that had given me a seraph for a parent. Little time was lost in arrangements ; and on the following day, before it was noon, I had once more deserted "the old house at home."

A quick and pleasant journey brought me to Paris, and, at the Hotel Meurice, as it was the most English spot in the French dominions, I found Uncle Tom. It was a broiling evening, and he was sitting at a table from

which the more substantial dishes had been removed, with spiced condiments, and a suicidal-looking bottle of port before him. His welcome was full of kindness, but marked by all his characteristic peculiarity; and when, during the discussion of the refreshments with which the table was presently replenished, I called for a flask of Macon to wash them down, he uttered a groan, and executed a grimace, such as might have accompanied the extraction of one of his double-pronged grinders.

But what a capital fellow he was for all that! Liberal as a prince (a *façon de parler* constructed probably upon the *lucus à non lucendo* principle), ever thoughtful, considerate, and never, even in the extremity of eccentricity, losing sight of the finished gentleman. We got on together like Pylades and Orestes: beat in company every covert of the Fauxbourg St. Honoré; dispensed our twin oglings over the Champs Elysées; rode, strolled, dined, in inseparable unity; while, in the gratitude of my heart, I consented to imbibe a liquid said to be the juice of the

grape of Portugal, but which, in taste and appearance, was identical with the bilge-water of a collier.

Let me not, however, win more voices by this exemplary passage of my life than I really merit. So long as it pleased Uncle Tom to disport himself, at home or abroad, I was his *aide* ; but when he was wont to seek his chaste repose, his nephew was accustomed to indulge a vagrant fancy.

When the moon shines upon the *Boulevards des Italiens*, or lights up the pleasant walks of the *Tuilleries*, it is more than male human nature, in its teens, is capable of, to resist a saunter beneath it. At this crisis, the queen of night was in her zenith ; so after the *ballet* at the *Académie* had lifted my enthusiastic relative to the second heaven, and three or four *petits verres* had sent him to bed to dream of Houris, and such like, I was wont to roam in search of the picturesque, moral or physical, as it might happen.

It was during one of these rambles that, some hours after midnight (I write it with

sorrow and shame), I entered a *salon de jeu* over the Café Trocadero in the Palais Royal. There were but few persons present, but those were engaged in playing for heavy stakes, and in a state of high and irritated excitement. Shortly after my entrance, two of the players, masked and reeking from some neighbouring haunt of revelry, exchanged offensive expressions, which terminated in a blow being struck by him who seemed the coolest and most collected of them.

The scene that followed in a company of Frenchmen, at boiling heat, may defy the imagination to overdraw, if indeed it could do justice to it. All gesticulated, blasphemed, and roared for deadly instruments, with one voice. The latter demand was but too promptly complied with. Swords were instantly supplied, and, waiting but to divest themselves of their coats, the giver and receiver of the blow threw themselves into mortal combat.

Both were accomplished masters of their weapons, and the contest would have been

one of perilous interest, but that they were pressed upon, each by his particular partisans, to his great embarrassment; and after the exchange of a few determined passes, in which mutual mischief was done, he who had been stricken sheathed his sword in his adversary's side. As the man fell I sprang forward, and caught him before he reached the ground.

No sooner was the result of the quarrel manifest, than the room was deserted by all the players, as well as its temporary proprietors, who snatched up their money and moveables, and made a precipitate retreat.

Alone, almost in darkness, with a dying, perhaps a dead man, whose end had been brought about by violent means, and that too in a place of very questionable repute, mine was any thing but a pleasant situation for an Englishman in Paris, at the period to which this adventure belongs.

Still, to abandon a fellow-creature in such a strait was impossible; so, having summoned the waiters, we searched his person for some document that might disclose his name and

place of abode. We had little difficulty in ascertaining these facts, for his left hand still grasped a card, on which, according to the French habit, he had been pricking the *coups* as they came up, that bore his title and address:—

THE MARQUIS DE L——,

PLACE VENDOME.

Thither I caused him to be removed as soon as a carriage could be had, and assisted to place him upon a sofa in an apartment of a splendid hotel.

Day had begun to break, and the rays of a clear autumnal morning were streaming through the half-opened casements, and, mingling with the blaze of the lamps, threw a strange, unnatural light upon the gory figure that lay extended upon the couch, so placed as to catch the fresh air of dawn. The face was livid as that of a corpse, exhibiting no sign of vitality, except the heavy dew that rolled profusely from the stony brow. Sur-

gical aid had been sent for, while I strove to stanch the blood that poured from his wound.

At this moment, footsteps were heard upon the stairs, the door opened quickly, and a tall, graceful woman entered. Her attire was gorgeous; around her raven hair was a chaplet of white roses, drooping and faded, and in her hand a small mask of black silk, that told how her recent hours had been employed. It was evident she was a stranger to the catastrophe that had occurred, for she crossed the chamber, warbling the *refrain* of a popular air.

The centre of the room was gained, and the scene revealed! There lay, before her, a prostrate body, from which life's tide was ebbing fast; over it stood one whose person was dyed in gore! Her eye took in all at one withering glance. For an instant she stood, clasped her hands together, and smote them against her brow; then, with a cry that seemed to rend the heart asunder, she exclaimed—
“Marston! Father of heaven, have you done

this?" and sank to the floor as one stricken by the lightning.

* * * * *

But a short hour before, amid the wild mirth and loose festivity of a *bal masqué*, the pair had parted—thus to meet again. The scene was one but too common to the grotesque of Parisian life—a gaunt drama, a tragic pantomime, wherein death is a harlequin whose wand turns lusty life to a gibbering skeleton, wassail to want, time to eternity. The man was past the prime of life, and seemed accustomed to strange reverses, for he dealt with his present jeopardy as a matter of course. What linked the woman to him was a mystery—but was not Caroline's career all a mystery?

CHAPTER II.

P A R I S—*continued.*

Young France—*Vive la bagatelle*—Uncle Tom as the Sybarite—Also as Mentor—Also as Uncle Toby—Taking it easy—A French surgeon—Good breeding and bandaging—An equivocal party, and some remarkably naughty personages—Stylish, but shocking bad.

“ Full *twenty* times hath Phœbus’ car gone round
Neptune’s salt wash, and Tellus’ orb’d ground ;
And *twenty* dozen moons, with borrow’d sheen,
About the world have times twelve *twenties* been
Since —— ”

Hamlet.

“ The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot
temper leaps o’er a cold decree ; such a hare is madness, the
youth to skip o’er the meshes of good counsel the cripple.”

Merchant of Venice.

“ How have you done
Since last we saw in France ?
Norfolk. I thank your grace—
Healthful, and ever since a fresh admirer
Of what I saw there.”

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER II.

La jeune France may be a political Phœnix, produced from the ashes of the “*trois jours*,” but, depend upon it, *la belle France* is morally and socially the same that she was when Sterne let us into the secret of her idiosyncrasy.

Her chivalric symbol may be changed—her immortal *fleur-de-lis* for ever faded—her snowy banner levelled with the dust: but, in all her joyous relations, she is unaltered. Make but a slight allowance for the freaks of fashion—for the cultivation of *favoris*, and the abandonment of *maréchalle* powder—and ye shall see her in all the same—the land in which existence is a jubilee—or a farce.

What if a dynasty has been uprooted in Paris, the green elms of the Tuileries still wave in their bravery : what if her flag no longer fling its folds over broad Europe—go to the Boulevards, and look upon life as a never-ending holyday. And long may it be thus ! Doubtless, Plato, “ thou reasonest well.” But may not men be merry and wise ? Is philosophic thought but another name for bile—indigestion—blue devils, and despair ? It is something to have a specific for a November fog : here it is.

What time the atmosphere of St. James’s, which it is my fortune (*soit dit*) to breathe, and wherein I have my being, resembles *purée aux pois*, I straightway bethink me of the bounding spirits—the indescribable exhilaration of heart, that attended my early experience of Paris. Before me rise countless glad faces and laughing eyes : I hear glee-some voices—I drink in the odour of flowers—I mingle in the hilarity ; and “ my bosom’s lord rests lightly on his throne,” as erst he was wont, when the wine-cup was quaffed,

and the frank courtesy exchanged amid the brilliant *fêtes* of the *Champs Elysées*.

Again I dance the length of a summer's day among dainty damsels, and youths with heels as light as their hearts. The orchestras, *al fresco*, are replenished; batches of fiddlers, worn out with the exercise, give place to reliefs; lemonade flows around; and all—all is sunshine in the bright canopy above, and the happy spirits beneath it. Myrtles—orange-trees—illuminated pavilions—*jets d'eau*, bright as liquid diamonds—statues—garlands—fountains—festoons of lamps—"moonlight, music, love, and flowers"—with such accompaniments as these in my mind's eye, I see thee once more, fair Paris, and thy Elysian Fields!

The perpetual carnival which constituted the routine of Parisian society had its influence on more experienced heads than mine. Mr. Thomas Longueville, who, in England, was as grave as a judge, or a wig-block, appeared to have given sobriety to the winds, and carried himself as jauntily as a *roué* of the olden comedy. From a sedate gentleman,

prone to politics and port wine, he had grown into a beau who perpetrated satin breeches, *ecarté*, and Roman punch, as regularly as the sun went down.

The fate of the "house divided" was in process of fulfilment at that moment. I thought not then—but how often since have I reflected—upon what the home of my fathers had become—and what it might have been! In the halls of B —— sat its lord, a lone and solitary man. It may be that, by nature, he was not as light of heart as others; but circumstances had converted him into a cheerless misanthrope. My mother lived wholly apart from him; and uncle Tom, his lamp burnt to the socket, was flaring up at the finish with the expiring effulgence of train-oil.

But at the time thoughts like these came not between my pleasure and my philosophy. I was in a land flowing with milk and honey; and mine was not the spirit to despise the good the gods offered. The Fauxbourg St. Honoré did not contain a pair more thoroughly disposed to make life endurable than the uncle

and nephew. We laid every restaurant of the *Palais Royal* under contribution, and lived after a fashion that might have moved the envy of Apicius or Sardanapalus.

Oh, ye *cartes* of the gods—celestial catalogues of “veau à la crème,”—“turban de filets de lapereaux”—“salmi de bécasses”—“poulets à la reine”—“macedoine en char-treuse”—“gelée de citron renversée”—“des gauffres à l'allemande”—“mizaton de poires soufflé à la jannot:”—your memories are sweet as zephyrs fresh from beds of violets! Visions of rump-steaks and onions, begone!—my gorge rises—I shudder and flee your presence—hideous, horrible, cannibal contrivances!

On the morning succeeding the scene in the Place Vendôme, it was late when I joined my uncle, who had already broken his fast, by the aid of peaches that would have done credit to the garden of Eden—*café au lait* fit for the Light of the Harem—and divers qualities of *chasse* in quaint-looking flasks, that seemed tipsy with their luscious contents.

I was in no mood for moralising, yet I could not but look with a strange feeling on an old man, who had gone on eating hours after he had gorged his palate, for nearly half a century, at so slight a penalty. He was a little rounder and redder than nature had made him—but what was that to a gourmand, for the privilege of dining from soup to ice every day for forty years ?

As I looked at his hale, hearty countenance, that might have served for an emblem of content, good humour, and good health, his eye fell on mine, which seemed to impress him with any thing but an idea that the proprietor was either well or happy.

“ If my advice be worth taking,” said he, “ you will make an effort to get to bed before other people are getting up, not merely for appearance sake, but because you’ll find the advantage of it by and by. Going to roost at sunrise is not the thing for the stomach ; and I need not tell you, that no animal will thrive that’s off its feed. Ring for some hot coffee.”

One is rarely at a loss for the means of personal examination in Paris; and one of the hundred mirrors of the apartment soon explained the cause of this address. Had my uncle waited for the performance, he would have had no reason to conclude that late hours had impaired my appetite. To do him justice, however, he gave me fair play; and it was not till after a dish of *filets de mouton à la bellevue* had disappeared, accompanied by a liberal libation of *chateau Lafitte*, that he returned to the charge.

“Well, well, I see,” he continued, “it is not a trifle will spoil a young fellow’s digestion; but for all your style of going to trencher, there’s something amiss with you. You look as pale as if you had seen a ghost; what have you been about?—losing your money—running away with a *dame de comptoir*, or pinking one of your particular friends? Put down that Dantzie; you have had enough already.”

What a system of triple brass mine must have been, that I did not swoon outright!

Before me rose the night's *mélée*—again the bright swords gleam — cross — and one has found a sheath in a human heart !

Oh, the ineffably horrible sensation to hear, and see, and *know*, the passage of steel through flesh, fibre, and muscle ! A deadly sickness came over me as the scene recurred to my imagination : cold drops stood upon my forehead, and I clutched my chair, or I should have fallen to the ground. The old man's tone of raillery became one of real anxiety.

“ Hyde, my boy, what *is* the matter ? ” he exclaimed, rising and laying his hand upon my shoulder. “ For God's sake, speak, and without reservation : what agitates you in this manner ? Surely you can have no secrets with me.”

It is urged against Lord Byron, in certain of his poems, that he has adopted an unbecoming levity of style. Such may be the case, but it certainly is the *façon de parler* popular at our marts of learning, and is, or was, the vernacular of our Universities. Also,

as surely was it that, without a thought of effect, or an iota of affectation, but with a strong effort to make the morning's cookery sit upon the evening's butchery, I thus replied to his inquiry.

"The fact is, uncle, I *have* been in a bit of a row, as you suggest. Somewhere about daybreak, I fell in with a party of swash-buckler Counts at a *rouge et noir* table, when one of them let the breath of dawn into his adversary's lungs, and the breath of life out of them. May I never see such a game of *rouge et noir* again!—faces black as hell, and hands reeking like shambles. Faugh! it was no evidence of bad taste in Hotspur's fop that he forbade them to bring 'a slovenly, unhandsome corse betwixt the wind and his——'"

"Hold, sir!" cried my interrogator, with a voice and a look which, making allowance for figure, was no bad imitation of his, who, in our day, identified himself with the muse of Shakspeare—"do not insult me with this ill-timed ribaldry. What am I to understand

from your allusions? Do you mean to convey that you were, but a few hours since, witness of, and privy to, a murder?"

"Uncle," I answered (for, as he lost his temper, I recovered my temperament), "do not, let me beseech you, be so energetic. I certainly—to borrow a figure of speech from your own vocabulary—did, last night, see a foreign gentleman 'pink'd!'—which, I take it, means, to wound with a sharp instrument—a crime of a deep dye."

"Puppy!" roared the little man, his patience wholly gone, "alter your tone, or by —— (here uncle Tom swore as uncle Toby did before him—let us hope with a similar result) "I'll knock you down! Are you aware that you are likely to be brought to the gallows, and cover your family with sorrow and shame?"

Tears rolled down his plump and pleasant cheeks at this appeal; emotion filled the throat so recently occupied by the sunny side of a peach; it was a sight of too much suffering for my nature to resist.

“My dear, dear uncle,” said I, taking his poor little plump hands, as round and as cold as snowballs, between mine, “forgive me; be not discomfited; listen, and I will tell you all.”

The promise to make a clean breast of it is a pledge more easily, and much more frequently, given than performed. I scarce know how I had been led to divulge as much of my *Palais Royal* affair as I had already let out: certainly I did not feel quite at ease about it; and in communicating our griefs, it is said, we lessen them. Still, as to telling the whole truth, that was out of the question.

Though the little *bon vivant*, with whom I was sojourning, was by no means the sort of personage to inspire awe, Macbeth might have sung his “amen,” as the burden of a ballad, with greater ease than I could have told uncle Tom the part that Caroline had enacted in the recent tragedy.

I, therefore, began my narrative with my ascent to the pandemonium of the Café Tro-

cadero, and thence continued it through all its incidents, to my leaving the wounded marquis in the hands of his domestics, at the hotel in the Place Vendôme.

Not a word was lost on my companion, who swallowed every item with such zest as that with which the sultan may be supposed to have feasted on the stories of the Thousand and One Nights. At the conclusion he arose, and, having summoned a waiter, desired that his carriage might be at the door with the least possible delay.

“Hyde,” said he, traversing the chamber as fast as the circumstances of his *case* permitted—and at three times the pace I had ever before seen him attempt—“both in wisdom and humanity our course is instantly to see this wounded gentleman. If the quarrel was honourably conducted, he will say so, and, of course, express his acknowledgments for the part you took in it: if he was unfairly dealt with, we are bound to see that the delinquent is made amenable to justice.”

No doubt these were highly creditable sen-

timents, and such as no human sophistry might hope to turn aside. Also, the execution of them was an act to make the heart glad. Nevertheless, I looked forward to it with as little pleasure as if *I* was to be executed, instead of a most honourable design.

Excursions undertaken for a disagreeable purpose are remarkable for their brevity; consequently we reached the end of our journey before I was well settled in my seat.

The hotel was a huge gloomy edifice, approached by a *porte cochère*, very much like an English prison, as great French mansions are. It was let out, as they manage in the rookery of St. Giles, to as many families as could contrive to stow away in it, the marquis being resident *au premier*.

Having notified to the porter the object of our visit, to my inexpressible surprise and relief we received for answer that the family had that morning left Paris for the south! All that we could get out of the fellow was the name of the surgeon who had been called in, and to him we made the best of our way.

A Parisian *médecin* of *supreme bon ton*, twenty years ago, was one who carried an oracle under his cambric frill.

“Messieurs,” he answered, with a seraphic smile to our questions, “have no anxiety about the marquis. This accident was nothing—absolutely nothing—a mere scratch.”

“A scratch !” I exclaimed, thrown off my guard ;” why he had a hole drill’d in at the ribs and out at the shoulder-blade ; these eyes saw him skewered through and through—spitted like a capon.”

“English gentlemen,” said the surgeon, with a bow from the Minuet de la Cour, “have such an emphatic method of expression ! Permit me the honour to assure you that there is no cause for anxiety. Monsieur le Marquis left Paris without feeling the least inconvenience from the affair of last night ; indeed, so far from having done harm, it will rather serve his general health —.”

Uncle Tom did not wait for the sentence to be finished ; but, taking an abrupt leave, hastened to his carriage.

“ That jackanapes is a d—d rogue !” he exclaimed, as we drove from the door. “ There’s some mystery under all this legerdemain, and I’ll come at the bottom of it—never trust me if I don’t.”

* * * * *

A glorious autumn night was still young, and a party sat around a well-furnished board in a *salon* that looked upon the Boulevard des Italiens. The members of it were dispersed in such attitudes as best ministered to their ease, with little regard to the stringent ceremonies of society. On one ottoman reclined the symmetrical form of a woman; on another, a man, cushioned and arranged, as if suffering from severe indisposition. Wines, fruits, and *liqueurs* were scattered on the table, and all the appliances of luxury were supplied with profusion.

The group, however, did not convey the idea of an assembly intent only on present pleasure. Excitement, indeed, was its characteristic, but there were shades which passed across the surface that told of feelings dark as they were deep.

“ Has nothing been heard of Von Hoffman ? ” inquired he, who was evidently an invalid, from whatever cause ; “ the scoundrel ! has he escaped unscathed—me and all ? I could die, and happily, to know that he was not clear of the toils.”

The woman raised herself slowly, but with an action that betrayed no infirmity of purpose, and fixed her flashing coal-black eyes upon the speaker.

“ Talk not of escape,” said she : “ do I live to hear a *man*, and that man *you*, speak of the possibility of failure ? I have perilled soul and body in the cause !—pause not, neither turn aside, though perdition lie in the path. Oh ! think upon the stake I have already jeopardised ; while you have but thrown for a chance with all to gain, and nothing to lose ! Remember your pledge, and remember *me !*”

* * * * *

Who were they that spoke thus ?—the world’s outcasts, reared in need, and the scorn of vice, because of ignorance to understand, or

experience to estimate its consequences? They were of the most pampered of Fortune's children: her sons and daughters, born to goodly heritages, and bred as befitting their estate. But Indolence was their nurse, and Luxury their preceptor, who, in the wantonness of indulgence, left nature to follow its own impulses, and youth to the guidance of its own heart, which is deceitful above all things.

CHAPTER III.

LA FRATERNITE D'ARGUS.

A characteristic etching of Gallic intrigue—Cartoucherie and *diablerie*, struck off with a bold hand — English sharp practice, with *sauce à la Juif*—A taste of adventure, enterprise, and mystery — A disreputable lady, and a lover with dust in his eyes, as well as in his pockets— Oh 'tis love, 'tis love, that does such things as make the angels weep !

“ These shall the fury passions tear,
The vultures of the mind ;
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
And Shame, that skulks behind :—
Or pining Love shall waste their youth ;
Or Jealousy, with rankling tooth,
That inly gnaws the secret heart ;
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged, comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow’s piercing dart.”

GRAY.

“ The tempter or the tempted, who sins most ?
Let’s write good angel on the devil’s horn—
Is’t not the devil’s crest ?”

Measure for Measure.

CHAPTER III.

About a league from Paris, on the road to Versailles, there stood a small *château* — as French as white stucco, green doors, and *jalousies*, and an avenue of poplars as straight as a ramrod, flanked with wooden fauns and dryads, could make it. It was a place of no pretension, but there was an air of comfort and condition about it rarely exhibited by that desolate refuge, that stone and mortar omnibus—the hackney *hotel garni*.

Still, the style of company by which it was frequented was by no means in keeping with the humble abode at which they were wont to assemble. At its wicket were to be seen

dashing equipages and curvetting coursers depositing their aristocratic-looking burdens, while the stores of choice fruits, flowers, and viands, that constituted its daily supply, bespoke tastes and appliances befitting a palace.

The neighbours, however, knew that its occupants were English, and that was sufficient to reconcile them to any exhibition of caprice on the part of a people whose wealth they were disposed to admit gave *carte blanche* to their humour. Gay forms, brilliant costumes, rich appointments, and strains of melody, were the tokens whereby it was known to the many : — how was it revealed to the few ?

London is said to be the rallying point of the broken in fortune ; Paris is the rendezvous for the desperate. In the character of the French nation we have an interpretation of the causes that people the *Morgue* with its ghastly company, and choke the current of the Seine with the clay that has “ put off immortality.” In the metropolis of England is

to be seen—alas ! too often—the misery that lacks the courage to beg ; in that of France, there is as much, perhaps more, actual wretchedness, but you meet it not abroad. In her streets poverty stalks in unshrinking hardihood. Hunger there wears a bold wild eye ; the homeless, houseless wanderer, the sneer that seems to set fortune at defiance. He is not one of those who are content to perish piecemeal : reckless and gladiator-like, he gives his breast to fate—if he succeed, it is well ; if he fail, he dies, and leaves no mark.

Among the honourable professors of the occult art of “living by one’s wits,” I have said the Baron von Hoffman attained high eminence. Desperation had sown both invention and audacity within his brain. In his career, as wave follows wave, had one scheme succeeded another more or less successful in its fulfilment. By one of the chances of life he had been placed for a few moments in the company of Caroline G——, shortly before she had become an inmate of my Surrey retreat. Thither he tracked her steps, ana-

lysed the demeanour of its haughty mistress, and conceived and effected his purpose.

Caroline was not to be classed with those women who "have no characters at all." The adventurer read truly in her lofty but compressed brow, in her proud lip and reckless eye, a world of latent daring. He fixed upon her as the fitting tool to carve out a free fortune. He saw her shaped to become the nucleus of a party, the conductress of wily intrigues, one around whom victims and associates would alike arrange themselves in emulation; whose beauty waited on her wit, and whose eagerness of attainment infirmity of purpose would never baffle: in short, *une maîtresse-femme*, worthy the court of Louis XV.

By what means he invoked "the spirits that tend on mortal thought" to unsex her sufficiently to meet his views, may be rather surmised than explained. While yet flushed with the guerdon of guilt, he placed her in Paris, where circumstance and his arts soon filed her mind to the desired temper.

From that period stole into existence a

strange association, of which few, even of its principal members, were aware of the ultimate scope. Gradually augmenting in number, its "brothers" exchanged signs of recognition, of intelligence, or warning, within the precincts of the splendid hotels of the Parisian capital.

Few are ignorant of the second-hand mania, borrowed from Germany, of our gallic neighbours for mystic brotherhoods. In Paris are always to be found scores of half-lunatics, half or whole sceptics, ready to combine for any conceivable or inconceivable project; for plunder or politics; for lust or learning; for merriment or murder. This society, this *fraternité d'Argus*, multiplied and waxed wealthy. Three times in the week, at an abode of almost princely adornment, met for pleasure or consultation its ostensible chiefs. There, counts, marquises, chevaliers, rich speculators of all kinds, men of mark and likelihood, gathered around the fairest dame in Paris — its mistress.

None bore more lightly than Caroline the burden of dark secrets; nothing was more

recherché than her dress and equipage, nothing so exquisite as her *petit soupers*. Who, save her accomplices, were to detect the uneasy scrutiny that often accompanied her courteous reception of a stranger, or the depth of meaning in the eyes that would follow his step ere he disappeared into some inner chamber. Or, if men won and lost fortunes within her walls, if wealthy foreigners were seen for a brief week or two to pay adoration at her shrine, and then altogether decline from Parisian circles, none traced their ruin and despair to the sumptuous hotel of the 'Place Vendôme, nor as the result of the hidden orgies of the guests of a certain *maisonnette*, hard by the ancient woods of Satary.

Meanwhile strange stories circulated through the drawing-rooms of the light-hearted metropolis; descended thence, a theme of breathless commentary to *grisettes* and *valets*, and were as suddenly hushed and forgotten. The substance of one of these was as follows: a young Italian had appeared at a *fête* given by Caroline on the first night of his arrival in

Paris ; subsequently he had supped with Von Hoffinan and others at a country *château*, and they had seen him no more.

On the succeeding day it appeared that he had dismissed his train, intimating he had no present need of their services, as he should immediately proceed *incognito* to England, whence he would dictate further instructions. One servant was not to leave Paris till he heard from him. This person remained for months in vain expectation. At last, his funds totally exhausted, and in mortal uneasiness, he made fruitless inquiries as to the fact of his master's embarkation, and finally applied to the police.

That efficient body had at one time obtained a clue to the mystery, but it was either lost or dropped ; and, while inquiry was still afoot, a communication from the Italian himself quieted rumour. It was dated from an inn on the shores of a Westmoreland lake, and contained an enclosure to his *homme d'affaires*, which his servant was requested to deliver in person. This was an instrument

to empower him to raise a considerable sum, to be transmitted to a certain house in Paris for his use. A London banker, commissioned by him, remitted his servant a letter of credit on Paris, sufficient for the exigencies of his journey.

Not long after the first establishment of Caroline in France, she attended the so-called races at the Bois de Boulogne. At that period these *courses aux chevaux* were an anomaly in Parisian life ; and the solid *bergères* of a duchess in the old *quartier St. Germain* might as well have been set running on castors as the animals then trained for the purposes of racing in France. Some such remark was uttered by a well-mounted Englishman to a companion, as Caroline and Von Hoffman rode by ; the latter, turning round, exclaimed : — “ Ah ! friend Ridsdale, moste happy meeting you : and the shanse that bring you to Parish ? ”

“ A run of bad luck in London, and the need of some security from the sharks of the law,” replied Ridsdale, carelessly, “ are the

chances which afford me the good fortune of meeting you in France." As he spoke this to Hoffman, he looked it to the fair English-woman who rode at his side.

"Let me," said the Jew, "have the plai-shure do indroduce my vife;" and from that hour Launcelot became a constant inmate of the hotel in the Place Vendôme.

The springs of human action are too complicated and too many to be detected by the most experienced professor of natural philosophy. The occasion that made me acquainted with the German at the cottage at Thames Ditton had supplied good reasons for believing that he and my cousin were associates, neither of a recent acquaintance nor ordinary character.

What had become of their friendship from that period till they were found together in Paris, I never learnt. It is possible that Von Hoffman was really captivated by Caroline, and had removed her from the probability of being seen by Ridsdale; it may have been that the meeting in the Bois de Boulogne

was an affair previously concerted. Upon the first of these points I was enlightened afterwards.

At the season when I was thus tasting the champagne of existence that constituted the life of the gayest capital of the world, one half the *roués* and *vauriens* of that metropolis of pleasure were leagued to defraud and plunder the other. It was a complete system of moral Thuggism—the fine gentlemen sparing themselves, however, the menial business of the executioner, and leaving their victims to cut their own throats.

Bands organized for play in all its varieties, having captains and other officers appointed — with signs and countersigns of fraternity — existed in the principal quarters of the city. Women, the engines of power alike during the reigns of absolutism and republicanism, have ever swayed the genius of France. Caroline, both in person and in character, possessed all the requisites for becoming a formidable instrument where female influence was to be brought into operation. To beauty

the most imposing, she united extraordinary readiness in reading the dispositions of those around her, and that promptness of action when the plan is formed, which is almost the guarantee of success.

Soon after the interview between Ridsdale and Von Hoffman at the races in the Bois de Boulogne, they became the leaders of one of those associations. Aided by the talent and fascination of the fair Englishwoman, the circle at the hotel in the Place Vendôme was soon the most attractive in Paris.

The career of the confederates was a golden one, whose very sunshine led to the storm that caused its destruction. Enormous sums were won from an Italian of condition, and the appropriation of the spoil produced the jealousies, recriminations, and personal rancour, whose climax was effected in the *salon de jeu* of the Palais Royal.

Among those to whose *soirées* I had the honour of being admitted, was an ancient lady of the *haute noblesse*, whose acquaintance my mother had long enjoyed, and at whose

hotel she had met, I believe, the unfortunate Louis and his fair and ill-starred queen. The exalted flavour of the society, or the elaborate stew which the French imagined to be tea in those days, had never left the maternal palate. She never ceased eloquently to describe the condescension of the *Duchesse*, and enjoined my regular attendance at her hotel, as the means calculated to elevate me degrees in social importance.

The *grande dame* was a little lady, with a cushion of astonishing dimensions on her head, whence grew, or appeared to grow, a whole garden of artificial flowers. Her dress was like a monstrous curtain, open in the front, and so surprisingly short-waisted that it appeared a miracle how she contrived to raise her arms. Beneath it was a petticoat of white satin, studded with coronets embroidered with gold. The parchment visage, gorgeous apparel, and railroad utterance of that awful old woman, will never be erased from the tablets of my memory. As I arose one evening from a long worrying which this an-

tiquated *causeuse* had been inflicting upon me, she concluded her harangue with these words of warning :—

“ Gardez vous bien de vos compatriotes, Messieurs les Anglais, ce soir, et tous les soirs. Il y en a parmi eux d'affreux Cartouches. Vous ne me croyez pas? Eh bien, je vais vous raconter.”

I laughed, but did not wait for her story, and seeking one of the breezy *allées* of the Champs Elysées, I soon recovered the effects of the soporific dose I had been compelled to swallow.

Every man has some peculiarity of manner or address. I am conscious of many. As I sauntered onwards, the figure of a very elegant woman attracted my notice, and, as my habit is, I put my hand under my eyebrows—horizontal with them—the better to distinguish her. A passer-by at this moment arrested, as if by the slight movement, regarded me fixedly, and then made the same use of his right hand. I thought it a piece of impertinence, and continued to shade my face as before.

The man, who was of most questionable appearance as regarded his appointments (like the great class of *independents* in France, gentlemen of some 500 francs of annual property, who live within their incomes) approached nearer, and laying his fore-finger on my shoulder, said, significantly,

“Frère d’Argus—”

“Cent diables !” cried I, roughly, “what do you mean?”

“Cent et cent,” returned the speaker, with a satisfied air ; “I know you, brother, by your sign : one of our fraternity has pressing need of service ; he is English, too—come with me.”

I am by no means indisposed for a bit of enterprise now ; but twenty years ago I would have descended the crater of Vesuvius if there had been the chance of an adventure at the bottom. A *fiacre*, therefore, was straightway procured, into which, after giving the driver his orders, my strange companion followed me.

The place to which he conducted me was a

country retreat, apparently three or four miles from Paris. The dwelling-house, of which I caught the indistinct outline, appeared to be small; but in the rear, by which our approach was made, there was an extensive garden, surrounded by lofty walls. It was a brilliant moonlight, and from the height on which it stood might be traced the shadowy indications of Versailles, Mary-le-roy, St. Cyr, Meudon, Trianon, and St. Cloud. But the two individuals of either sex, who walked through the grass-grown paths of that desolate garden, saw not, neither cared for, the flood of glory that poured its golden light upon them.

The man was young, of a slight frame and careless carriage, with fine marked features, but their handsome expression marred by the strange wildness of two large, coal-black eyes. These never for an instant rested upon any object, but roamed unceasingly, as if in search of something they eagerly desired to detect. He leant upon the arm of a woman as tall as himself, and she whispered to him in soft and

tender accents, as one would address a child.

“ I have saved you,” she said : “ all is now well : the days of my thralldom are numbered.”

“ Beautiful Caroline !” returned the youth, passionately, “ you before whom my spirit bows—to whom my soul turned in those terrible hours—tell me that we shall, indeed, never part. I will make my fortune available in England. My friends will not look with surprise on this, as the letter I wrote months since will have prepared them for it. Let us begone at once ! Is there aught to prevent our going ? Why should we linger here ? Is he not dead ?”

“ He lives still,” replied the woman.

“ Is there, then, a hope of his recovery ?” asked the young man, stopping abruptly, and gazing upon her wildly : “ is there a possibility that he may live to tear you from me ?”

“ None ; dream not of it,” whispered his companion, laying her hand forcibly upon the arm that leant upon her,—“ none—there is

no hope for him. His sands are run—he is of the quick for whom the grave is dug.—*This night is his last !*”

* * * *

“The party on whom this sentence is passed is Launcelot Ridsdale—the Fury his mistress : and her cavalier ‘par amour,’ he who lost his gold, and won the winner’s light o’ love. He may lack assistance, and you will second me, should it be needed. For the present, farewell.” This said, he departed : my familiar on compulsion, the *frère d’Argus*.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE.

The turf in France—The track in America—Your Gall as a chasseur—Bois de Boulogne racing—A sporting cove—Downy, very—The thing done artistically, both as regards dress and address—An out-and-out do, and no mistake—The first appearance of the safety “Rig” among the Crapeaus.

“Horses they ride without remorse or ruth.”

BYRON.

“Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time.”

Merchant of Venice.

“They loosed him with a sudden dash—
Away! away!—and on they dash—
Torrents less rapid and less rash.”

Mazeppa.

CHAPTER IV.

Horse-racing is not a resource to which a people may turn in the dearth of amusement as to carnivals or stage-plays. A taste for the turf is the essence of the spirit that spurs men on to the love of field-sports. The chances of its adoption and favour are not alone contingent upon the bias for them as popular pleasures, but they are limited by it. With us, sporting constitutes an important parcel of the social scheme. Our national sports have been purged of their early grossness, and kept upon equal terms with the general progress of refinement. At their head stands the turf; and let such as desire to learn how English gentlemen make provi-

sion for their favourite recreation visit Newmarket, and examine its economy there.

Next to England ranks America, as a racing country : next—but with what an interval ! It must be admitted that our republican brother is no sportsman. Jonathan fisheth little, shooteth less, and hunteth not at all. Hence it is that, notwithstanding the “ tracks ” in the United States do a “ pretty particularly awful ” stroke of business, their exhibitions sadly lack the true flavour. The dash, the fervour, the brilliancy that make racing the fitting pastime of those who court stirring scenes for the flow of soul that waits upon them, are unknown to such tardy devices as four-mile heats. With its advancement as a State will, no doubt, improve the style of its social festivities, but it will be long ere the *races* of the New World shall resemble those of this speck of the Old.

In various parts of Europe, racing contests form items in the entertainments got up for popular purposes, as well as to encourage the breed of horses. Of late years, France has

energetically adopted such a policy :—would that the quality of the grain held out any hope of repaying the skill with which the seed has been selected, and the harvest cared for.

My design is surely not to offend those to whom I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life ; but as an honest retailer of the fruits of experience, I am bound to say that, until they can revolutionize the French character, those who seek to ingraft sporting tastes upon it will have their labour alone to recompense their pains. How often have I seen a *chasseur* sally forth, his musket hanging behind him, as if to guard the spot where human honour is said to abide, waited on haply by one or more libels upon doghood—tripeds with which an English cur would scorn to lift a leg in company ! How often have I gazed in wonderment, too intense for mirth, upon such a turn-out as this, and thought—will any hare that is *compos*, or partridge in its senses, be circumvented by such “a weak invention of the enemy ?” And if our neigh-

bours of the light heart take the field after no more orthodox fashion than this, how deem ye they go abroad to forest and flood?

They hunt in cocked hats, with swords girt upon their thighs, and instruments of music round about their middles: this I know from my own knowledge. Of their fishing I cannot speak. If I may hazard an opinion, however, I should suggest that the art of capturing the inhabitants of the waters is not yet practised as a sport among them; and that, probably, the only line which a *preux chevalier* has as yet disposed of in pond or river, has been his “mortal coil.”

Sporting, as an abstract influence, is unknown to any portion of the world but England; here it is an instinct. This it is that affects the whole character of our rural pastimes; we pursue them for “the delight that sets them off;” elsewhere they are followed for gain, pomp, or the accident of temporary circumstance.

If thus it be with hunting, shooting, fishing, any of the allurements to field or flood—

beyond all, racing is our own. The nations of the earth may come to us for our unrivalled blood. They may make the cultivation of the horse the especial business of the state. Governments may lavish treasures to promote that which here is effected by private enterprise; but before they can make their materials available, even should they succeed in obtaining them, they must acquire the means of their application.

I have seen the natives of almost all the countries of Europe; I have had opportunities of observing Arabs, Tartars, and individuals of the most celebrated equestrian districts of the world, on horseback; but I never discovered one who displayed a knowledge of the true principles of riding—of the philosophy of horsemanship. Therefore, shall the turf be the reproach of all other lands, and the pride and privilege of our own, so long as the stranger shall ride as if he were a part of his saddle—the Englishman, as though he were a portion of his horse.

Let it not be supposed that the perpetra-

tions of the *Champ de Mars*, or the *Bois de Boulogne*, twenty years ago, were caricatures of the Olympian revels now held at those places. Look on any picture of French racing, and, with slight allowance for the vista of years, you look on that of to-day. Here and there, the modern affair may, indeed, possess a more characteristic feature, but the expression of the scene is the same. A French race-course still exhibits a company as little at home as if essaying to imbibe their soup with chopsticks, or to waltz to the music of the tom-tom.

On the afternoon of a bright autumnal Sunday I was led to mingle among the strange fish that had left their proper element for the *courses aux chevaux*. The difference between a negro from the Senegal, and a “flaxen-headed ploughboy” from the Severn, is not more manifest than that which distinguishes the equestrian orders of England and France. As I loitered about, a mounted party passed ; they were conversing emphatically in French, but there was more than one Englishman

among them. A business-like air, so wholly out of keeping with the burlesque that prevailed around, first drew my attention to the party, and then followed a vague idea that either the voices or persons of some members of it were not unknown to me.

One don't, however, stop to analyze impressions on such occasions, and I had already ceased to remember that any thing beyond the most ordinary had occurred (intent upon the ingenuity of a certain Oriental magician, who was relieving his intestines of vast volumes of flame), when a hand, lightly laid upon my arm, solicited my notice. I turned, and at my elbow stood my companion of the previous night.

I dare say I regarded him as a cockney is wont to recognize a pickpocket ; but his manner was the perfection of the ultra "cool." The "to kalon" of civilization *is* assurance ! I flatter myself that my youth was remarkable for no lack of bronze, and yet there I stood, undeniably worsted in a stare by a fellow got up in the extravagance of evil taste.

Sweet reader ! — the boyhood baptized in floods of bishop, unknown previously to the annals of Alma Mater — the manhood it had delighted Stultz and Hoby to decorate and define—shrunk at the presence of a caitiff who encased the image of his Maker in green silk net pantaloons, and top boots !

“ Well met again, brother,” he began, accosting me as he might one whom he had known in swaddling clothes ; “ well met : a more agreeable rendezvous than the last, eh ? ”

Although he spoke with a somewhat foreign accent, his English was perfect, and manifestly not that of a Frenchman. There was an elaborate effrontery in his bearing, intended, no doubt, for a fashionable carriage : his look was even offensively vulgar, and yet you at once discovered that his life had not been passed among coarse people. Still nothing about him betokened the dependant of persons of condition : had we met a couple of centuries sooner, I should have set him down for one of those roistering gallants whose want of conscience and principle stood

them, in the good old times, in lieu of every thing else.

As it was, who he might be, and wherefore he took occasion to throw himself in my way, were questions it seemed I might no longer blink. To be seen on apparently confidential terms with a member of a secret society, ill-favoured and worse appointed, was not a distinction that I particularly affected. While pausing to contrive means for accomplishing my purpose, the speaker, whose attitude was "stand at ease" in the superlative, continued — "Didn't the bird of paradise croak like a raven?—quieted the count though—and that was no easy affair. Smooth as he seems, and loving as a dove, the fellow has the heart of a tiger, and I feared for *his* safety between them. However, on my return from the house, the danger I apprehended was at an end. He is out of immediate peril; for the present, all is safe. I told him *whom* I have enlisted in his service, and he seemed little pleased with the ally I had selected. But let that pass; he has some private cause, probably, for not

caring to owe an obligation to you ; that's not *my* affair ; I have nothing to do with people's caprices. He did me a service when I could scarce have needed a friend more, and so long as I live he shall never want one. Monsieur, I thank ye for your courtesy of last night, and I hope for an opportunity of returning it. This will not be the last time we shall meet ; at least, so I hope." Thus saying, and tapping his boot with a riding-whip he had been flourishing very artistically during his speech, the frère D'Argus departed.

The shouts with which the grotesque exhibitions, supposed by the good Parisians to represent the *courses aux chevaux à l'Anglaise*, were hailed, had ceased, and the *Bois de Boulogne* was fast parting with its merry-hearted populace, when, beneath some trees, in a secluded part of the wood, I observed two horses led round a circle, and carefully watched by a group that stood hard by.

The professional air about the arrangements, so unlike that of the early portion of

the day, attracted me, and, as it was yet too soon to think of dining, I persuaded uncle Tom (he had breakfasted *à la fourchette* but two hours before) to order his carriage towards that which seemed to promise something worth the exertion of looking at.

Under the shade of some noble elms, two magnificent thoroughbred horses were being walked in their clothes by a couple of grooms, followed by a pair of shrewd-looking men, on ponies; the whole as English a *morçeau* as ever found its way into a French landscape. A little beyond them stood a *calèche*, with some half-dozen horsemen around, with whom its occupants were engaged in very animated conversation.

As we drew nearer, a small tent appeared in the rear of the carriage; and, from the manner of those who formed the mounted group, it was evident that *calèche*, cavaliers, and canvass, belonged to one party. Whether the approach of a chariot, whence an elderly gentleman was taking an observation with a telescope, alarmed the fair tenant or

tenants of the *calèche* (I distinctly saw that there *was* a lady in it) I cannot say ; I only know it is far from improbable that it might. Few women, in a state of civilization, save those born and bred in Paris, can stand an ogling through a four-foot tube, furnished with concave and convex glasses. However that might have been, no sooner was our intended intrusion discovered, than the blinds of the *calèche* aforesaid were as hermetically closed as those of the Sultan's harem.

At this moment two figures issued from the marquee, in silk jackets, caps, leathers, and boots of the most orthodox character. The first was a tall stripling, who, despite a forward growth of moustaches, and a most confident swagger, was obviously raw. The other, in attire, gait, make, and demeanour, was the ideal of a Newmarket jockey.

Perfection of any kind has, with me, magnetic influence. Twenty years ago, as now, a horse, or his rider, finished at all points, was, and is, a sight to rivet my notice. At any time, I should have been struck with such

a representation of a most picturesque object ; but, after the horrible illusions of the morning, it was like an oasis to the eye of the desert wanderer.

I looked at him from head to foot ; canvassed the artistical tie of his cap ; the spurs, graceful as the wires of a lute ; the jacket of sheen, that so well became his lusty outline of shoulder, and gracefully tapering waist ; the snowy leathers, and boots that Vestris might have worn in a *pirouette*—all these I scanned, and pronounced the wearer a mirror of modern chivalry.

And now the anxious process of preparation has commenced. The pawing courser is stripped of hood, sheet, and breastplate. The tiny saddle that the trainer poises on his wrist is gently laid clear of his withers, carefully fitted and girthed, and the jockey lightly tossed upon it.

With steps that scarcely seem to feel the ground on which they tread, the eager steeds draw to the starting-post ; the word is spoken

— “ Go ! ” — they are away like the flight of thought !

Surely a race, bedight in all its pride and circumstance, is a thing to make the blood glow ? David ! David ! had there been a Derby or a Leger in thy day, how far more efficacious wouldst thou have found them than a kingdom of Shunamitish maidens ! . . .

The pair ran together, stride for stride, the course being indicated by small white wands set up at about a hundred yards apart, the winning-post surmounted by a silken flag. Half the distance is accomplished, and the tall stripling is leading, his horse going well together, victory within his grasp. The last turn is made, and they strain for the goal, like falcons stooping on their prey.

The distance lessens between them : does not the leader seem distressed ? By heaven, he falters ! — reels from his stroke — heeds not the rider's hand or heel — stops as his adversary springs before him, and yields like a craven, when another stride had been a triumph !

Solitary as the scene was whereon this trial was enacted, there were strong evidences both of the anxiety that watched, and the exultation that hailed its issue. No sooner had the result been ascertained, than the *calèche* left the ground at the best haste of the Norman horses by which it was drawn. The horsemen, too, were in busy conclave, ere the speed of the racers could be checked ; and as they returned to weigh, the meeting between those engaged in the contest and their friends was as slack of courtesy as regarded one, as it was cordial and joyous in the case of the other.

The loser rode alone, with a dejected and sullen air. The noble animal on which he sat stumbled forward, every pore streaming like a fountain, every nerve flaccid and powerless ; the very emblem of suffering and impotence. He was not, however, left to indulge his ill humour alone. While one half of the party attached itself to the victor, the other surrounded his less fortunate opponent. These offered the recipes for philosophy usual on

such occasions. But the patient was indifferent to consolation.

“I know it all,” said he, in a marked Irish accent; “I’m done, and tolerably you’ve cooked me; but there’s a little left to hash; take care how ye get your fingers into *that* dish.”

Pity that so few were present to hear so ominous a warning! He who spoke it, ere twelve moons had filled their horns, became the most desperate of all those who, in our time, had set their lives upon the hazard of a die. At the hour when first I met him, he was a part of all that was gallant and gay in the most brilliant circle in the world; at the present he is a manacled felon in the penal colony of Norfolk Island.

But come with me to the tent, where the conquering hero is weighed, and found of honest balance. He throws aside its folds, and steps forward to receive the congratulation of his friends. And who is he on whose tact and talent thousands depended, and by whom thousands were realized? The victorious rider of the *Bois de Boulogne*—the

mirror of modern chivalry — is the man of questionable appearance — the frère d'Argus of the green silk net pantaloons and top boots.

* * * * *

Such was ever—and, probably ever will be —the perfection of the machinery of French intrigue. Did France but give to liberal policy one fourth of the energy she lavishes on party — one tithe to public virtue of the talent she prostitutes to the schemes of coteries, she would be a nation of warriors and sages, instead of a land of mimes and machiavels.

CHAPTER V.

FOR ENGLAND HO!

Introduction episodical—Paris passages made easy—Not so French highways—Calais—Captain Hamilton—Mate Smithett—The French play—Laporte—More angels than any English writer has introduced on his scene since the days of Milton—Hush, ye pretty warbling choir—A horrible sickness—A Deal better.

“ Ego, utrum
Nave ferar magnâ an parvâ ; ferar unus et idem.”

Horat. Epist., lib. ii., epist. 11.

“ Thou think'st it much, that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin ; so 'tis to thee ;
But when the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt.”

SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER V.

We should find it a most convenient addition to our store of working philosophy, to have constantly in mind that time does not stand still in those places, or with those persons, on whom we have turned our backs.

The reader pauses, rests the volume on his knee, and turns to his companion, whose demitoilette, half sheltered behind those muslin draperies of the Marine Parade, is too connubial to be misunderstood. Laying the open volume on his knee, as aforesaid,

“Julia, my love,” he observes, “what odd beings your writing men and women are! What do you suppose the author of this book, for instance, assumes? Nothing less than that

people are in the habit of imagining no portion of the world goes round except that on which they happen to be standing—how very odd !”

Our friends are at breakfast—the hour at which the post reaches Brighton, and, indeed, when it ought to arrive everywhere. A servant enters with a salver, on which are certain oblong packets.

“ Letters from Keswick, I know,” exclaims the dame ; “ do—do give me mine, William.”

Straightway, seals are broken, envelopes torn asunder, and each devours the sheet so eagerly sought, and evidently so full of interest. The gentleman is the first to break silence.

“ What will the world come to, Julia ? We have been but ten days from home, and that fellow, Smith, has run away with my chestnut mare, and Jones, the clerk, with Robinson, the sexton’s wife.”

“ William,” returns the lady, “ listen to what my sister writes :—‘ Pretty work there has been since you left the manor. Mary Brown, the Sunday-schoolmistress, who looked

as if she lived upon water-ices, has sworn a son to the ostler at the Goat.' ”

Why so aghast, ye who “ dwell in Cumberland among the hills ? ” Is it because a child is born into your neighbourhood, or a wife or a palfrey has bolted from it ? These are incidents which every day brings about in a region that ye may command from the parish steeple. No ; the true reading is, that, being out of reach of the cakes and ale, ye cannot understand why ginger should be hot in the mouth of another. Take my word for it, your case is a common one.

The morning that followed the racing in the Bois de Boulogne bestowed an epistolary dose upon uncle Tom and his *protégé*, the conventional course to which all who travel are subjected. The act of engaging in a pleasure tour, from time immemorial, has invested friends and kinsfolks at home with *carte-blanche* to write disagreeable letters. Without looking at my relative, I more than surmised that he was discomfited ; he raised a glass of *chambertin* to his lips, and replaced it

on the table, untouched : I was satisfied that the spirit was troubled within him.

“Hyde, *mon brave*,” said he, “I hope it won’t in any way interfere with your happiness to be told that my sister, your reverend mother, is going to the devil as fast as a German prince and a second crop of ringlets can carry her : too much good sense to care for that, my philosopher, eh?”

And here uncle Tom subjoined four expletives, of the value of one pound sterling, according to the present scale, as settled by act of parliament. Having thus cleared his throat, and lightened his spirit, he drained his cup with that air of satisfaction which is said ever to follow a virtuous deed, and waited my reply.

My own communications were not of a description to make me feel at ease. It was clear things were at sixes and sevens at B——; for although my father wrote very graciously, indeed very kindly, there was that in the style of his letters which convinced me he was less happy than he deserved to be. Other corre-

spondents had also favoured me with half hours selected from the interval between breakfast and luncheon on Sundays, or such portions of their leisure during the week days as were without resource, save the forlorn hope of note-inditing.

Of course the whole batch did not contain a dozen lines worth the trouble of reading, while some were grievously provoking. But there was one, the contents of which filled me with annoyance and concern, because I could neither question their truth nor their sincerity. It came from T——, my Oriel chum, with an intimation that it would be quite as well were I to transfer the scene of action from Paris to Cheltenham, where the female portion of my family might benefit by the presence of a male relative.

Now, as I knew that my friend T—— was, at the moment, sweethearting emphatically, on his own account, among the Gloucestershire hills, there could be no doubt the tendernesses of a third party, which could attract his notice, must be sufficiently conspicuous.

“Uncle,” said I, replying to the question written on my companion’s face, “as you feel disposed to be national, we will take the road to Calais at once: you find the French wines too acid; I’m sure you do.”

The old gentleman, in token of acquiescence, smiled like a hyena doing the amiable.

“The day after to-morrow we’ll leave Paris,” was his rejoinder; “and I only hope I may meet with nothing where we’re going more sour than claret and *châblis*.”

The space that remained for us I employed more immediately to the purpose of the inquiry that interested me, than a month of ordinary research would have accomplished. The same evening we dined together at Meurice’s, where the *table d’hôte* then was, as it still is, the principal rendezvous of English desultory diners. Accident placed me next to a physician, a fellow countryman, celebrated for his convivial qualities, who was for many years the Magnus Apollo of that hostel. From him I learnt much of the history of the *maisonette* on the Versailles road—much more,

indeed, than tended to my comfort or consolation.

That Launcelot Ridsdale and Caroline G— were its proprietors, he assured me was well known to the police, as also the uses to which it was applied. During his partnership with Von Hoffman, some considerable robberies had been effected, the plan being to give a political tone to their parties. This served a double end; it diverted the surveillance of the authorities, while it brought victims whose enthusiasm ensured their being easily duped.

Very soon, however, the secret, that high play was the actual business of these assemblies, caused them to be sought by the most experienced masters of the die in Paris, which means in the world. This quickly turned the tables, and heavy losses were the consequence. Out of these arose the cause of quarrel which produced the encounter, whose issue has been already told.

On the disappearance of the baron, necessity, the mother of invention, helped Ridsdale

to a scheme which promised to prove a mine of wealth. A taste for English equipages, horses, and sports, was fast becoming the rage of the French metropolis. The most aspiring of her youths affected the turf, and matches were daily being run in the *Champ de Mars*, and at other places. His industry in promoting or making available resources never failed him. At the period when the allied army occupied France, the well-known Capt. A—— had joined a light infantry corps, then lying before Paris. His thirst for excitement soon led him to every haunt of profligacy in that most profligate of capitals, and in a year or two he was compelled to retire from the full pay of his regiment, deeply encumbered.

Although the liberality of a wealthy and fond father supplied him with ample means, they were far from adequate to his necessities, and being an admirable horseman, and *au fait* to stable craft, he took a lead in the French racing circles. Ridsdale had noted that an ambition for the turf was the weak point of the young Parisian fashionables, and contrived

to fasten an intimacy upon A——, with the view of making use of him in such speculations arising out of that sport, as circumstances should bring within their reach.

The wary northern, however, speedily discovered that the young soldier was too full of his country's ardour and love of pleasure (A—— was an Irishman) to give promise of his becoming a safe agent in undertakings requiring the cool head to carry out, as well as the bold heart to attempt. Also, he learnt that his intended ally had a command of funds, and an extraordinary faculty for raising supplies, which rendered it possible to turn him to account in another character.

Ridsdale pondered over all the probable means for working out his project; but, as it frequently falls out, chance accomplished it for him without an effort. Among the English professionals whom the racing taste had already drawn to Paris, was the brother of one of the most notorious of the betting fraternity, who found a change of air, at that particular time, as convenient as wholesome. In an

interview with Ridsdale, he announced the arrival, in Paris, of one of the most determined and uncompromising spirits recorded in the annals of the British turf. He was then in his noviciate, but, as a rider, was without a rival, and possessed of all those secrets whereby the turfite then first began to “make assurance doubly sure.”

This worthy suggested the match with A—, which came off as we have seen. He promised to secure the result, upon the condition of receiving half the stakes ; but as the secret of making a horse “safe” was then a science the existence of which was known to but a very select few, the result was looked for with anxiety as well as doubt.

We have seen how the essay triumphed ; and it was the fortune of S—— to introduce into France, as subsequently into this country, some of the most successful *coups* ever attempted on the turf.

That portion of this information which had reference to the part that my cousin was enacting I communicated to my uncle, as, on

the morning following, we quitted Paris together. It was no easy thing to excite him, but evidently he was greatly moved by the intelligence. Still all he uttered was a sort of soliloquy: —“ Shakspeare says, ‘ there is a tide in the affairs of men’—there is a torrent in the destinies of many.”

All things have an end at last, and even our journey to Calais had a termination, but I confess it was a consummation of which I almost despaired at one time. No kingdom of the earth, barbarous or civilized, was in so utterly desperate a condition with respect to locomotion as *la belle France* a quarter of a century ago. For elegance of design and finish, accommodation, lightness of draught, and qualification for pace, a French diligence was not to be named in the same day with a Brighton bathing-machine; and as for the private carriage, it was burlesque gone distracted. If you can imagine a lord mayor's coach disrated for a century, and during that period used as a scavenger's cart, you have a

faint idea of the turn-out common to the *seigneurs* of that date.

We had a road chariot of Hobson's, it is true ; but, as it could not go without horses, and they would not go without postillions, our case was nearly hopeless. I will not, however, stay to tell of the three Flanders mares that left us in the lurch at Beauvais, neither of the manner of man that called upon the Virgin to enable him to drag into the good town of Montreuil "*ces cochons d'Anglais.*"

I have said, we at length reached Calais, and, every hotel in the place being full to overflowing, we were ultimately stuffed into a horrible den—whose title I forget—in the *Rue du Soleil*. The cause of this populous plethora was, that the gales common to the equinox had commenced ; in short, that it was blowing great guns, and very few had any stomach for the sea under such circumstances.

Two or three mortal days did we drag through, at that hostel, whose cook might have taken his degree in the kitchen of a union

workhouse. Even now—if, by accident, I happen to live a little too freely—I can shake off the effects by merely calling to mind the quality of the soup they gave us at the *auberge* of the *Rue du Soleil*.

At last there came a lull, and it was made known that, at midnight, a packet would sail with the mails for England. Punctual to the hour, uncle Tom and I, arm-in-arm, passed the ramparts, and entered the port.

There, alongside the southern pier, lay the clipping cutter, then commanded by Captain Hamilton: boat and skipper as good as ever faced “dirty weather.” “The wind howled, cordage strained, and sailors swore;” so they did, the reprobates, as if the sun were shining and the zephyr kissing the idle canvass, instead of there being a dark night, a gale of wind, and a lee-shore before them. Picking our way along the sloppy decks, on which carriages, luggage, servants, and *commissionaires* were mingled in chaos, we descended to the cabin, to a better company in a worse plight.

Already every birth was tenanted, and the

floor scarcely afforded space whereon to place the sole of your foot. A set of particularly pretty girls was grouped on the right as we entered ; so, giving my companion a hint about securing a nook for himself, I drew my cloak around me, gave my *casquette* a jaunty sit, and desperately threw myself into that battery of bright eyes.

The ports of London, Southampton, Bristol, and all such as lead you, by degrees, into the ocean, at least afford note of preparation to the channels of bile ; but when, as at Dover and Calais, you are at once transferred from the fireside into the trough of the sea, who can be astonished at the consequences he may witness ?

The hour of twelve was passed, and a gentle ripple announced that we were under weigh. Here, for some moments, we glided on in treacherous tranquillity, when, without more ado, our craft gave a lurch that placed one moiety of the ship's company in the relation of antipodes to the other.

Soon after taking up my position, flanked,

on the left, by a pair of cherubs, in loves of lacecaps, and, on the right, by an angel in her hair, I managed to learn that they formed a portion of a *troupe*, which Laporte (subsequently manager of the Italian Opera) was bringing to London as a histrionic venture. On either side, as I have said, were gracefully reclining those syrens of the *coulisses*, and in front, and around, the cavaliers of the society ; Laporte himself occupying the table in the centre, and the " principal tragedy " seated with his back to the mast.

This was our *status in quo*, when the good ship cleared the pier-heads, and a scene followed, such as might have been expected if each member of the party had a stomach pump inserted into the thorax. Never believe those who assure you that steamers are more prone to cause you to make a clean breast of it than sailing vessels. I've been tolerably familiar with the epidemics (to speak gracefully) of both, and, with a lively swell on, could never discern a point of odds in favour of one over the other.

Pass we the horrors of the details, and suppose the hour (that which full many had declared would be their last) arrived, when the mate, descending with a greasy leathern bag in his hand, demanded the fares. His first attempt was upon the dishevelled Houris by whom I was begirt. They shook their heads, and pointed to the figure on the table.

That shape, holding a hat that had been upon extra duty between its legs, noticed the appeal with a sound like the penultimate of a bagpipe.

“It is right to wait until exactly we are arrived,” it said; “I shall pay you, sare, when we are to Dover.”

“Sharn’t get to Dover this trip,” replied a voice that seemed to come out of a copper tube; “we’re a running for the Downs.”

The last trump had not caused a more awful effect on the “poor players.” The principal tragedy started as never tragedian started before.

“What you shall say?” he exclaimed

“ronning down!—*sacré tonnerre : tout est perdu !*”

“*Mère de Dieu,*” responded the fallen angel, who lay upon my heart ; “*mourons mon ami—oh ! mourons ensemble !*” (this was the sentimental lady of the lot).

“Ees it all up?” inquired one with a handkerchief tied under his chin.

“No,” said the occupant of a berth, “but it will be, very soon, I should rather think.”

A crash that caused a shout of agony in a high treble followed this sally.

“There goes the anchor,” said the mate ; “she’s in smooth water :—who’s for Deal?”

CHAPTER VI.

“ALL IN THE DOWNS.”

The mountain of the cockney is the molehill of the Gäel
—Your action of the wave levels all distinction—Off Beachy
Head—All in the Downs—A sea scene after *Huggins*—
Houris at close quarters—My uncle “spouting” — “Ye
gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease”—Dover,
all Wright!—My first steamer.

“The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And looked down over Attica; or he
Who has sailed where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo: or hath taken tea
In small-eyed China’s crockeryware metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London’s first appearance :—
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence.”

BYRON.

“The wind-shaked surge, and the high and monstrous main
Seems to cast water on the burning bear,
And quench the guards of the ever-fired pole:
I never did like molestation view
On the enchafed flood.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“Impetuous roar
Pursues the foaming surges to the shore.”

DRYDEN.

CHAPTER VI.

If we examine mankind in the aggregate, we shall find that, for the most part, their ideas are abstract portions of their experience or knowledge. Thus the mountain of the cockney is the molehill of the Gäel; while the prince of the Niger or the Congo, who has been fortunate enough to secure a green baize bathing-shift, and a pair of yellow plush breeches, presents himself, on occasions of state and ceremony, in a guise that an English tinker would be afraid to assume at a bullbait.

Upon this principle alone can we account for the storm-nurtured son of the channel—that grim mate of the Dover packet—who.

holding on by the bulk-head "and his eyelids," exclaimed, "She's in smooth water."

Now-a-days, the traveller whom business or pleasure leadeth to the deep, has no opportunity of understanding the term "snug," as applicable to navigation. Nevertheless, ere steam had superseded canvass, when, close hauled on a whole-sail breeze, the clipper beneath you was clawing to windward, you felt a sensation of firmness and security which no steamer that ever floated could convey. It is only when riding at anchor, in a merry ground-swell, that your sailing craft adopts the motion of your steamboat. Then, indeed, all distinction is levelled, and so is the passenger.

Thus was it with our ship's company, who, albeit they were moored in the Downs, might, as far as their condition was affected, have been lying-to in a white squall, off St. Domingo. Thus was it with us, when that mate of the family of the stormy petrel demanded, "Who's for Deal?"

As he spake, there flashed upon me a galaxy

of eyes, whereof each particular star would have served as the sun of a system. I never was fortunate in describing the *materiel* of fascination, but the reader, being instructed that while in the berth above me lay uncle Tom, apparently in his last agony—while in the matter of *la physique*, Prometheus enjoyed internal peace, compared with my case—may form his own estimate of the ladies of M. Laporte's *troupe*, when assured that, at such a moment, my only anxiety related to the proportion I might appropriate to my own share.

“Who's for the shore?” boomed through the skylight. Had a special offer been made prospectively of Paradise, not a sinner in that ship but would have refused it for six immediate square inches of Kentish shingle. With raiment, and without—perpendicular and horizontal—all made their way up the companion, and surely seldom did such a company salute the presence of young Aurora; and grand and glorious was the scene of the motley rendezvous.

Morning's first sunlight was tinging the

summit of Beachy Head, at whose base was spread a fringe which, to the fancy, might seem to have been woven from snow-drifts ; while, to seaward, the site of the Goodwins was covered by a vast canopy of wild foam, that played over and about it like the fleecy clouds that love to revel round the summer moon.

But neither time nor place was suited to musings on the picturesque. Alongside, madly tossed by the billows, were two or three of those long, lanky craft, with amphibious crews, for which the harbour of Deal is so celebrated. Men of thews and sinews, of dexterity and daring, such as people few coasts where breakers burst, are those boats' crews of the Downs ; while to westward of them, upon the aristocratic cliffs of Brighton, dwell the rankest curs that disgrace blue water.

Still, with the land under our lee, and appliances for reaching it in attendance, our prospect seemed but little mended. What miracle was to transport us to those distracted pinnacles, that wheeled, dived, and soared, like

the astonished sea-birds by which they were surrounded? Our burly skipper, with his arm locked in the weather rigging, was evidently debating the question to himself, as fitfully, and in tattered fragments of sentences, thus were heard the hailings from the boats:—

“Heave—the bite of—a hawser—to loo-o-o-ard!” “Haul—handsomely, my sons, stand—by—your—fenders!—On deck, there! lower away the pee-e-ple!”

The sea was making a clean breach over us, as, with scarce the interval of a minute between each, one giant wave followed another, sweeping the decks from bows to tafferel. The mate, however, had contrived to rig out an old hamper into the forlorn hope of an arm-chair, which, by means of the peak halliards, was hoisted over the side, and dropped “with a run,” into the boat—or into the water—unless care was taken to adapt the fall to the critical instant when boat and basket were plumb.

I relate the incidents of that wild hour by scraps, for it was only in snatches I had an

opportunity of making observations upon the scene enacted in it. The fact is, I was a close prisoner in the hands, or, rather, in the arms, of the French—embraced a hundred-fold more emphatically by half a dozen Venuses than was the son of Cinyras by the Queen of Paphos.

But it was no time for ceremony ; so, encircled by a batch of nymphs, known only to the dreams of the faithful, I put my best leg foremost, and, drenched with brine, managed to convey myself and my charge to the lee-chains. There arrived, and having deposited the ladies in the scuppers, I began to look about for the means of escape. The basket, in full work, was just then poised aloft, awaiting a favourable lull for the drop. The chance arrived, the tackle flew through the block, and, at the same instant, flew to leeward that which seemed the upper portion of my uncle, severed from the shoulders !

Down went the basket as if it were a diving-bell, a sudden swell having thrown the cutter into the trough of the sea, and then came another awful lurch, which dashed uncle Tom,

gasping for breath, without hat or wig, under the thwarts of a Deal boat.

How the rest was managed I cannot tell. I remember seeing a heap of wet linen tossed over the side—feeling that I was in utter darkness, with a horrid roaring in the ears, and a sense of strangulation in the throat, and then finding myself careering over a wild yesty sea, in such a fashion as few young gentlemen have ever navigated.

“’Twas a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalm’d between the seas,
Though on the waves’ high top, too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze.”

A lug, reefed to its smallest compass—the sheet merely secured round a cleat by a single turn, and held watchfully by one of the crew—was tearing us madly through the boiling surf, into which the weight of the wind upon that speck of canvass, from time to time, buried the bows of our shallop fearfully.

Amid-ships—parallel with the keelson, just enough of his mouth and nose kept above

water by bailing, in which every hand that could be spared for a spell was occupied—lay my fastidious relative, Mr. Thomas Longueville. His coat was rent from stem to stern, to use the vernacular most appropriate to the occasion—that is to say, from waist to collar—and hung on either side, hussar fashion, in duplicate. His head was as it came from the hands of Nature, or, rather, in a worse plight, for the little covering it brought into the world had departed even before hat and wig.

The species of his nether appointments defied all skill in costume, until it struck me that, in his haste, he had assumed his pantaloons with the behind before. Waistcoat there was none—neither stocking, boot, shoe, nor protection of any kind for the extremities; uncle Tom was, in fact, the *beau ideal* of a gentleman in a pickle.

“Choke” aft, miraculously poised upon the stern-post, sat the coxswain, his chin stuck between his knees, grinning like grim death as his lynx eye detected, and his ready hand anticipated, the surges that thundered and roared after us.

But how may I hope to convey an idea of the scene, and the *dramatis personæ* (without any metaphor) in the stern sheets? Half-a-dozen of the prettiest emigrants from the *coulisses* of the *quartier St. Germain* lay there “on their beam ends,” as one of the politest of the hands observed, as he placed a sweet little head, in a night cap of Valenciennes lace, upon the coil of a rope, “to lay easy.”

Pinned, with his back to the weather, by means of his feet propped against the lee-gunnel, and up to his loins in a sea-water bath, sat the hero of this tale, while on his dexter and sinister bosom reclined and floated a pair of young damsels, in a fashion whose comparison must be sought in the loves of the mermaids. Around were undulating cloaks, mantles, and pelisses, all, with their tenants in them, presenting just such a study as—barring the anachronism—David (not the king of Israel, but the painter of Paris) would have jumped at for a deluge.

But we are approaching the coast with a terrible rapidity ; and now it is within a cable's

length, separated from us, however, by a raging rampart of surf and surge, threatening instant doom to any thing mortal that might essay its passage. How apt are men, in their ignorance, to speak disparagingly of stocks and stones ! Let them wait till they know the true value of insensibility, and then rail against inanimation if they will.

Not the fourth of an inch removed from suffocation—supine—at the bottom of a villanous cock boat, reposed Mr Longueville, as much at his ease as if in the best bed at the Clarendon. He stood upon the threshold that separated him from eternity ; yet from his appearance you would have supposed that the waiter was at his door with a tray of chocolate and muffins.

It was at this crisis, when every sound and sight struck terror to the soul, and the sands of life seemed run to their last grain, that a fellow, abstracting a quid of the size of a fourpenny loaf from his cheek, thus bespake me :—“ As this here broken water as we’re a-goin’ to shoot mought be the last squeak for some on us, suppose you hand over the tip ;

a little ten-pounder's our freight for these here 'ventures; never takes a penny less; either the rhino, or 'bout ship, d'ye see?"

A hint, backed by the prospect of a violent death, should hesitation precede its being acted upon, is a form of eloquence more forcible than any known to oratory. The triton had only to open his mouth to secure the minnows. I had no money in my possession (a circumstance, indeed, of such general occurrence, that it may be regarded as a natural characteristic), and proceeded, as a matter of instinct in such cases, to my uncle.

Having made my need known through such portions of his organs of hearing as were above water, he thus, in submarine accents, applied himself to an answer:—

"Put your hand into the right pocket of my trousers, Hyde—you'll find it in the well of the pump—and help yourself. Ten pounds!—a positive trifle for so delightful an excursion; pray pay the gentlemen liberally for the gratification they have afforded us. Perhaps they may fancy some trinket that I carry

about me : d'ye think that handsome youth at the helm has any taste in brooches ? Your friend, the chancellor of the exchequer, there, has just the style of hand for jewellery : would he like the emerald I wear on my second finger ?”

While this *badinage* was in progress, I succeeded in rifling the speaker of his purse, and handed the captain of the gang the amount claimed as our ransom. This preliminary disposed of, he set himself earnestly to prepare for the catastrophe now close at hand.

Though we were, probably, not half a mile from the town of Deal, no land was visible, except the cliffs on either side the bay. In front, the spray hung like a curtain suspended from the black, fierce clouds which rolled and scowled over us. When Curtius took his leap, he, at least, *saw* where he was going. Who can conceive the horrors of a plunge into chaos ?

The first thing done was to “douse” the lug, for the purpose of easing her forward ; and then the word was given—“Stand by ! —out all oars !”

A mountain of water was toppling fathoms above our heads, as if in defiance of hope. Its crest streamed like a warrior's plume, as our pinnacle was lifted to its summit, there poised for a moment, and then launched into the abyss beneath. This was the signal for the effort of which life or death was to be the issue. The crew strained on their oars till the tough ash bent like a green reed. Strokes, fast and furious, force her onward, swift as the boiling surge with which she is racing ; and, with one great and crowning struggle, she is landed high and dry on the beach.

Deal, at the period to which this incident relates, was, and may still be, for any thing I know to the contrary, not just the place for a man to "find his comfort in his inn." The ladies, seeing that they were not amphibious, were constrained to take breath — and, perhaps, something more substantial — before they ventured on the road ; but nothing would content my uncle, except a chaise, and the prospect of an immediate asylum at Wright's.

To Dover, then, saturated with sea-water—

which *I* took the precaution to qualify with the contents of a tankard of porter—proceeded uncle and nephew. What a refreshing thing it was to observe the way our “boy” set about his business ! He might have seen some sixty winters : but he was a hale sexagenarian. Gathering together his spicy pair, he held them fast by the head till the word “All right” was given, and then let ’em go, in a style to astonish his most Christian Majesty’s most unchristian country.

Our wheels devoured the distance, as the poets say ; and, in little more than an hour, we were duly delivered in Dover. There the first sight that greeted us was our friend Captain Hamilton’s rakish cutter, quietly moored in the offing, and in the act of sending ashore her passengers’ luggage, in a far more respectable condition than the respective proprietors had landed themselves.

A speedy clearance at the custom-house having put our carriage and its supplies into our possession, after a much-needed toilette I strolled out while luncheon was being prepared.

Chance or instinct led me to the harbour ; and there, for the first time in my life, I beheld that mysterious machine which was to realize the halcyon of the olden fables. There floated the bark that impersonates Byron's image, and, indeed, "walks the water like a thing of life;" annihilating lee-shores, making the rough places smooth, and literally bringing together the uttermost parts of the earth.

Why had not the mighty conception of Fulton or Watt brought forth its wondrous offspring sooner? or, at least, wherefore had it not sooner been transported to the straits of Dover? what toil and terror would it not have saved a worthy company!

A moral essayist had found matter for a folio volume, in drawing a contrast between that which awaited me on my return to Wright's, and the events of the four previous hours. Of a verity, good and evil are dealt to us with an equal balance. "The more grief the more grinning," is an axiom from Paddy's country, as true as it is characteristic.

After such perils by sea as have befallen few elderly gentlemen since the days of the pious Æneas, it was better than a library of philosophy to have seen uncle Tom seated at his midday meal. A steak, underdone, was melting before him like snow in the sunshine, while adown that passage, which so lately the unrelenting waves had seized on as their own, was flowing the "regal purple stream," classed, by the bibitory, under the head of mulled claret.

Transfer him thence to the cushions of one of Hobson's chariots, on double springs. Four posters, of Wright's best, are before him — the soft breath of a young autumnal evening is coquetting with the incense of his cigar — London, the city of the world, is his destination — Hyde Marston is the companion of his travel. Would such not have been ample satisfaction for the fate of Jonas multiplied a hundred-fold ?

CHAPTER VII.

A tête-à-tête — The philosophy of four posters, from the Johnsonian school — The Bull at Rochester — A hyperborean bus — Tell me how you travel, and I'll tell you how you dine — Professional steaks — An English fireside — An English oration — Good counsel needs no bush — Gadshill — Gads-zooks the Downs on the stage — Venuses, four inside, and twelve out.

“The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
We pout upon the morning, are unapt
To give or to forgive: but when we have stuff’d
These pipes and these conveyances of our blood
With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
Than in our priest-like fasts.”

Coriolanus.

“All these are ours, all nature’s excellence,
Whose taste or smell can bless the feasted sense.”

DRYDEN.

“Examine how your humour is inclined,
And which the ruling passion of your mind.”

ROSE.

CHAPTER VII.

It might have been from the effects of that unparalleled collop and jug of spiced Bordeaux which the providence of Mr. Wright had furnished, or of that genial glow of patriotism wherewith men are said to be affected on revisiting the land of their birth; but, whatever the cause, if a painter had desired to sketch peace and contentment from nature, he could not have found a more perfect study than my uncle afforded, as he drew the folds of his cloak more closely together, and nestled himself in the corner of his carriage.

The sun had still some hours to sojourn in the west, as the heights of Dover grew less in the distance, and the garden of England spread

widely and luxuriantly before and around us. Johnson, who rarely said a foolish thing, whatever he may have done, declared that life contained few feelings more delightful than those produced by rapid vehicular transit. Thy notion was not a bad one, oh, sage ! and, with taste so orthodox, it is pitiful to reflect that thou wast cut off, ere the chance could have been thine to have taken the air on the box of the Brighton Age, with the ribbons drawn through thy philosophic fingers !

Our condition, albeit lacking the wild rapture of theirs who, in the days of England's glory—

“ When every *mile* of ground maintained its *horse* ”—

made hill and valley burn beneath the wheel of Mail or Telegraph, was still vastly better than that of the wight confined between the panels of a “ yellow post-chaise.” A travelling chariot and attendants — the whole in a sober livery, with four posters—that invention of the gods !—could man be borne on his pilgrimage in a fashion so fitted to his nature ?

Not as it seems to me, or as it seemed to uncle and nephew on the occasion with which we are now dealing, as *tête-à-tête* they rolled onwards for "the city of the world."

"Young gentleman," said my companion, withdrawing the weed from his mouth as we closed the fifth milestone, and for the first time disturbing himself into speech—"they lunch you meritoriously at the Ship, but there appears to me to be a peculiarly digestive property in a gallop, and I have serious thoughts of refreshing at Rochester—indeed, of setting up my staff for the night at the Bull. Favour me with your sentiments regarding such a course."

"It has occurred to me, sir," was my reply, "that the practice of illustrating an urgency with allusion to a case of life and death bespeaks great ignorance of human nature: to describe a pressure beyond mortal resistance it should be called a case of gastric. You say well; 'the Bull this night shall be our bed'—and board."

Barham Downs were created for the especial

exercise of post-horses—Canterbury and Sittingbourne for their supply. Backwards flew red lions — rampant — couchant — pendant : onwards came milestone toppling over milestone : crack went the whips—the road smoked ; and, as the evening star waxed bright in the deep blue firmament, the long—long High Street of Rochester was threaded to its extremest limit, and the portals of the Bull passed in safety.

This hostel, at the period of which I write, neither thought small beer of itself, nor was held in weak consideration by the denizens of the good city wherein it was situate. Not more than six years before, the barmaid had been kissed by the Emperor of Russia, what time he was *en route* for the British metropolis, and the establishment still *smacked* of the imperial condescension. The waiters, in black silk stockings and consequential faces, moved about with the airs of lords-chamberlains—the landlord received you as if he were holding a *levée*—the landlady with a drawing-room obeisance—and the chambermaids—but

there, I cannot help you to a comparison; nothing in mob-caps and rose-coloured trimmings ever approached the semblance of those chambermaids!

We had a good dinner, of course — good dinners constitute portions of travelling equipages, with two servants in the rumble. Few people have any idea of the systematic principle upon which your free vintner exhibits his rations of solids and liquids; accident alone let me into the secret.

I happened to be in the act of ascending the stairs of one of the free-and-easies in the vicinity of Covent Garden, dedicated to midnight melody and mutton-chops, as the waiter from the landing-place thus bespoke the *chef de cuisine*: “Cook, six muttons, four Welsh-rabbits, and three steaks (*professional*),” with a fall of the voice. Never having seen steaks of that sort, I watched for their appearance with some curiosity. As I entered the room, “Glorious Apollo” was in full grind; first, second, and third pumping out his lungs for the dear life. The song

ended, in came the supper ; each of the glorious Apollos being supplied with a slice of flesh, “ all bone and gristle, like a dying gladiator : ” I never see a dog’s meat-barrow without thinking of a professional steak.

We are constantly finding fault with our climate, with true human ingratitude—abusing its fogs, vapours, and the whole catalogue of its misty malefactions, without remembering the inexpressible luxury of a lounge beside an autumn evening’s fire, for which the close of every English summer supplies so reasonable a pretext. We had dined ; the Cannel coal threw its cheerful glow over the well-appointed chamber : the table was furnished with such fruit as you get only in England—there was the vintage of France—but I saw by my uncle’s looks that he was not quite satisfied.

“ Hyde,” he at last began, “ you have comfort here, to be met with nowhere else—that is a settled question : this is the land of comfort, and this house affords a very fair sample of it. I liked that Hochheimer at dinner ;

but don't ye think the claret deficient in body? Sound, safe tippie, but too light for fifty-one degrees of north latitude, eh?"

"My dear sir," I rejoined, "this most respectable jug of Lafitte in no way offends my palate; though, probably, the salt water you swallowed this morning interferes with your appreciation of its flavour. You want a wine of more character—permit me to take the Bull by the horns, and order a bottle of port."

The black-strap fulfilled the measure of Mr. Longueville's content. He drained a bumper of it in silence, then, filling again, he held the glass before the lamp, shut one eye, and examined it mysteriously with the other. After a brief space, the second was engulfed, and, inhaling a pinch of his favourite mixture—Martinique and Bolongaro—the old man fell back into the embrace of his easy chair, ejaculating—"that will do," in a tone which might have moved the envy of a Sybarite.

It was after some minutes thus passed in elysium that, still cultivating his ease at an angle of forty-five degrees, my Mentor entered

upon the following commentaries, being a man of the world's code of conduct for a modern Telemachus :—

“ Hyde, my boy, if there be one thing for which I have a greater taste than another, it is philosophy—I'll trouble you for a slice of that pine, there, to the right, where it seems ripest. Philosophy has been, all through life, the apple of my eye (by Jove, what an exquisite pine!) and as you are, as I may say, standing on the threshold of the world, I cannot better evince my regard, than by sharing with you the fruits of my experience.

“ In the first place, a word upon our own sex. I take it to be unnecessary to warn you against the unfortunates who perpetrate raspberry tarts and lemonade in the noon-day. Common instinct will teach you to avoid persons who jam or jelly before sunset. But, in London, where I design you shall forthwith make your *début* in earnest, you will find occasion for more senses than nature metes out to the human race in common. You will, probably, fall in with a set known as well-

meaning people—a *clique* you should fly as you would the enemy of mankind—who will advise you against the society of men having reputations for sharp practice.

“The error here is not altogether in the counsel, but in its deficiency of modification. Do not suffer yourself to fall into the clutches of the keen contriver: become not his friend, but use him as the bee does the nightshade. The rogue’s experience may help you to some point of device; never mind the agent—always take heed for the end. Shun a fool like a pestilence: it is bad enough to be without family, friends, money, or means; but, on this side the grave, there is no want so hopeless as the want of wit (except, indeed, the want of appetite).

“This must suffice you on the score of your fellows: ‘man delights me not’—it’s a monstrous dry subject—you do well to prepare that libation, prophetic of the toast for which I was about to call on you to crown your glass—‘LE BEAU SEX,’ from the Sandwich Islands to Baffin’s Bay—Heaven bless them all!”

Now, when we call to mind the wide berth uncle Tom had given the sex during his sublunary voyage, one is puzzled to reconcile his theory with his practice. That he drank the sentiment with sincerity there can be no doubt: how far he felt it may be gathered from the sequel, upon which he entered as soon as it became convenient for him to open his mouth without forfeiting the flavour of his bumper:—

“ Having thus disposed of the common pottery of human clay, we will proceed to its ‘ precious porcelain.’ From the first great epoch in the history of the world, we learn that woman is the most momentous of all human agents. Her influence is not the most conspicuous, but in its subtilty consists its power. Being unseen, it is secret from all but those on whom it is designed to act; and no intimation of its existence is permitted to them until it is *felt*. Man’s fortune is always, in some degree, effected by women—very generally she makes or mars it.

“ Let this unassailable proposition, this great

truth, be ever present with you : never cease to bear in mind that her spirit, when it is nature's heritage, is good—when the world's dowry, it is evil. You will marry, of course, for love, or money, or ambition. If for the first of those despotic motives, and the step be taken while your age is green, it is most probable you will be disappointed. Whatever stage your years may have arrived at, and either of the latter considerations induce you to conjugate, your union will never lead to that bower of bliss—a 'sweet home.' Should you postpone Hymen for Venus, you place yourself beyond the reach of all suggestions save such as may tend so to direct the course of your true love, that it shall run smooth.

“ Well, one who has more than once found the Syrens' isles under his lee, may haply help you to a wrinkle or two about that navigation. Let your golden rule be that which Chesterfield inculcated upon his son in the matter of other men's nuptials. You have been tolerably improper for a young gentleman in his teens ; but I think that is a folly,

to say nothing of the sin, of which you have as yet steered clear.

“ Do not blush, for I say what I believe, without any design of flattery. Unless you can speak the truth, hold your peace : if the birds *will* come to hand without being whistled into the snare, I suppose it is to be concluded their purpose is to be *captivated*. There, you see my code is not a very strait-laced one. The world is now before you ; you have your course to choose—to select the path of vice or virtue. The first *may* lead to temporary enjoyment ; the latter, though not always strewn with flowers, is certain, ultimately, to conduct to peace and contentment.”

I wonder whether the reader is as weary of Mr. Longueville’s oration as was the party to whom it was addressed ? Misfortunes are said never to come in single files ; surely, a man who is half drowned in the morning, may be spared the ordeal of a course of moralities the same night, though at the expense of the proverb.

Even while the old man spake, fell the soft

and soothing solace from his lips. The hearth is no longer a mass of golden blaze—it fades into purple—into azure—into grey mist, like to the twilight:—and all is dark. How glorious is the land of dreams! Passing fair are the sylphs with which its bowers of roses are peopled; its sounds are music, its air perfume. O uncle mine! would thou wert again of the things that be—again to syllable forth thy most narcotic humanities, and once more to “med’cine me to that sweet sleep,” for the which, twenty autumns since, I was indebted to thee in the best drawing-room of the Bull at Rochester.

As we slowly crept up Gadshill on the following morning, the *tête-à-tête* was a silent, perhaps a painful one. Where anxiety and solicitude exist, there is little room for pleasurable sensations from extraneous objects.

Few scenes in England are more national or replete with rural beauty than that which a bird’s-eye view affords from the summit of the aforesaid classic eminence; but the pair who looked upon it on that occasion was not

in a mood to relish the picturesque. Each had that before him which shadowed all present prospect ; and, when the ascent was conquered, and I called to the boys, “ Send ’em along,” my neighbour’s smile evinced his coincidence in the order, and his gratification at its fulfilment. No news had reached us since our departure from Paris of the state of affairs in Shropshire, or at Cheltenham. My care was for my father : my uncle’s spirit was full of misgivings and passionate resentments against his sister, evidently less on her account than his own.

Though, as I have said, my father’s position gave me much concern, other causes greatly harassed and disquieted my mind and heart. How many of my young and best feelings had been outraged by the discoveries that marked my sojourn in the French metropolis—how much of self-reproach and shame attended the return to my country and my home ! I had found a member of my own family the leader of a band of broken men, for whom no enterprise seemed too desperate or too vile. I found

him the instrument or agent of one steeped to the lips in sin and shame, whom my conscience whispered I had made that which she had become.

It is the first weight the buoyancy of the spirit feels that is ever the most difficult to support. That which throws despair upon our youth scarce casts a passing shadow over our maturer years. Like the writing on the wall, from which the eye might not turn away, sunny memories of home, and its tranquil, happy associations, rose, mingled and confounded in the whirl of debauchery, vice, and violence, the recollection of which clung like a troubled dream around me.

Thus had I contrived to colonize the present with a handsome muster of blue devils, when we pulled up with the purpose of putting on the drag for the descent of Shooter's Hill.

As we rattled down, we overtook a stage-coach, which was compassing the declivity at a more orderly pace. It is probable I should not have observed it at all, had it not borne so remarkable a resemblance to a colossal flower-

stand upon wheels. From box to gammon-board it was one waving mass of flowers, that put nature to shame by the variety and brilliance of their hues. As we gave it the go-by, it stood confessed the Dover "Eagle," in a plumage of the choicest inventions that the skill and taste of the Palais Royal could contribute—an eagle in the centre of a bevy of birds of Paradise.

"I say, Hyde," exclaimed uncle Tom, looking up at the load on the roof, "there are your Venuses, fresh from the foam; why don't you acknowledge all those 'nods and becks and wreathed smiles,' you frozen mummy? By Jove! the fellow's asleep."

Like uncle Toby, I could with truth have said, "I wish I was:"—but I spoke not till another hour delivered us at Jordan's, in St. James's Street.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FAMILY PARTY.

London hotels of the olden time, of late years, and of the present day—An “ordinary” customer an ugly customer—The convenience of patience—The inconvenience of choler—A tea party—Coffee and pistols for two—The keen encounter of wit—A miss is as good as a mile—Vanhall—Simpson—Addicted to sack.

“Hence—loathed Melancholy!

* * * * *

But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yelep'd Euphrosyne :
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity :
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek ;
Sport, that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter, holding both his sides.”

L'Allegro.

“Fair hostess,
We are your guest to-night.”

Macbeth.

“We generally conclude that man drunk who takes
pains to be thought sober.

Spectator.

CHAPTER VIII.

A quarter of a century of peace having made every Briton, at least of the patrician order, more familiar with the continent of Europe than the surface of the island on which he happened to be born, the reader needs no catalogue of the *agréments* of Paris to instruct him in what degree the French metropolis is a pleasant place.

The custom, too, that has taught every young Englishman of condition to regard that portion of the globe as appropriated to pleasure—as the scene prepared by nature and art for the peculiar enacting of the *dolce far niente* — unfits him to sympathize with the feeling of soul-prevailing satisfaction that attended my return to my native land. John-

son calls London "the needy villain's" home : without being actually a needy *villain*, I confess that a kind of domestic sentiment always attends my arrival and sojourn in the city—of Westminster. For the more eastern division of the capital I entertain less cordial prepossessions.

With hearty welcome, therefore, did I receive the embraces of the fog that enveloped us as we threaded the mighty maze which intervenes between the Bricklayers' Arms and the parish of St. James, and with right good-will sniff up the perfume of sea-coal, doing duty in Jordan's snug drawing-room, for the odorous vases of the *salons* of the *Fauxbourg St. Honoré*. Not that coming events, indeed, appeared in an atmosphere *couleur de rose*. From the moment I was clear of the barrier that *débouches* on the Calais road, I had experienced

—————"What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!—
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—
With love for many, and with fears for some."

Love, indeed, was no very prominent source of

trouble to me, but my measure of fears was running over. Whatever stuff a son's heart may be moulded of, a parent's cares must ever affect it, because they are its own. Pleasure, with its roistering chorus, may drown the "still, small voice" of nature; but, in the silence and solitude of grief, its appeals are trumpet-tongued.

In this mood, soothed by the comfort which distinguished all outward things, and inwardly distracted by a thousand misgivings, I was as perfect an incarnate moral of life as philosophy has ever imagined.

Among the changes of this transitory scene, not one of the least remarkable social contrasts now existing is that exhibited in the venerable galleried inns still to be found in the metropolis and most of our principal towns, and their successors, the gorgeous banquet-halls of railway stations, to which the traveller is suffered little more than simultaneous entrance and exit.

Midday between these was the family hotel, a convenience that has nearly disappeared in

the provinces, and that will be presently numbered in London among the things that were. The few that still remain are at the point of death from inanition, eking out miserable existences upon the profits of the two o'clock chop that the lady-guest is pleased to call luncheon, and bitterly pondering upon the turbot and haunch which her lord is discussing at the Carlton.

In the good old times of a score of years ago, it was otherwise. Bootle's and White's were fisheries of men, indeed, but not with such baits as three courses and claret, at seven shillings a-head. Therefore, while his people were disencumbering the carriage which stood in front of his door, enshrouded in the steam of its four posters, the landlord, *carte*—or let it be written nationally—bill of fare in hand, presented himself before the travellers.

Uncle Tom had already possessed himself of the Englishman's domestic place of honour, which he occupied with all its most minute observances—a residence in climes where the

practice of those rites was not possible, having in no way interfered with his zeal for their performance—Uncle Tom, I say, stood with his hinder part turned towards the hearth, the skirts of his coat drawn asunder, and resting, one in the hollow of either arm, and, to the landlord's most respectful demand as to "what he would be pleased to order for dinner?" replied, in tones that seemed lubricated with the savoury anticipations they conjured up—

"Crimped cod and rump-steaks, with a prodigality of oyster-sauce — some single Glo'ster toasted—a bowl of swig, and a sample of your Queensbury port."

Laudator temporis *agentis*! set me down to a solace for the inward man such as this—with a napkin on my knee, a cheerful fire in the hearth, and a boon companion to share it, and never dream that I will envy your cannibal feast of burning soup and flesh, swallowed against the time needed to boil up another thirty miles an hour.

According to the good old custom of the

good old family hotel, as soon as dinner was disposed of, and the sample of Queensbury port, flanked with olives and biscuits (there were as yet no ripe filberts), had made its appearance, my uncle inquired of the good old waiter in the powdered periwig, “who might be the present inmates of the house?”

In those days, not only families but districts frequented the same inns and taverns in town and country ; and thus, while my Lord A—— was secure of meeting his relatives and friends at a particular hotel in May Fair or St. James’s, Farmer B—— made sure of finding his neighbour at the “Pig and Tinderbox,” or “the Goat and Compasses.”

Like all human arrangements, this habit had its conveniences and inconveniences. Peradventure, there is here and there a metropolitan host who would cheerfully dispense with a part of his gregarious patronage : to my own knowledge, more than one rural Boniface has been nearly ruined by the favours of a constant customer.

In the good town of Shrewsbury, there were

—and still are, very possibly—three inns—high the *Lion*, the *Talbot*, and the *Raven*—whereat were weekly holden the market ordinaries, the charge for dinner being eighteen pence a-head, beer included. A frequenter of the market and its *tables d'hôte* was one Mr. David Williams, a dealer in Welsh flannel by profession, of whom his friends were wont to say that he was blessed with an excellent appetite, the English of which was, that when he dined at home he ate as much as six ploughmen, and when he dined abroad as much as sixteen. The *Raven* was David's favourite ordinary; and, for many a long year, the landlord put up with the flannel-merchant's custom with a resignation worthy a more distinguished martyrdom. At last, when bankruptcy began to stare him in the face, on receiving the accustomed eighteen pence for three fried soles, a rabbit smothered in onions, a pair of roast fowls, a pound of plum-pudding, and half a gallon of ale, his natural politeness forsook him, and he spake thus—

“Mr. Williams, I have no desire any longer to monopolize all your favours. I am quite satisfied of your wish to serve me. *Why don't you give the Lion a turn?*”

But all this time the good old waiter in the powdered periwig is waiting to announce who may be his master's guests.

“Town ain't not quite so full as we could wish, sir,” said the ancient serving-man, with that bow of reverence peculiar to the ever present consciousness of a chariot, with two servants in the rumble and four posters in front; “things is dull, as I may say, and there isn't nobody in the house, not in partiklar, except a young gentleman in the little parlour, as is a running away to his parents in Ireland, from some school that he's grown tired of—that's all. The first floor right is occupied by Mrs. Marston and shoot (suite), from Cheltenham.”

“Mrs. who?—shoot what?” cried the old gentleman, jumping from his chair. “Ah!—eh?—say that again, you old rascal—‘Mrs. Marston’—‘Cheltenham’—‘shoot!’ What

d'ye mean by that, you old vagabond?—eh? eh?”

“If you please, sir,” replied the waiter, growing as white as his periwig, “I mean as this here : in the small parlour, front, there's the young gentleman as is a running away to his father and mother ; this here left drawing-room is your honour's ; that there right is Squire Marston's lady's—your honour's sister.”

“And how dared your master not tell me my sister was in his house?” shouted my uncle, with astonishing vigour for his age and habits. “And how dare you speak of her being in the next room, as if I were going to take my coffee with her, eh?”

“Because I thought you *was*,” rejoined the fellow, his face whiter than the napkin that shivered between his thumb and finger, like the leaf of an aspen. “Mrs. Marston's lady's-maid has been into the housekeeper's room, and given orders to have coffee prepared, very partickler, for a gentleman her lady expects this evening. Master and I made sure the gentleman”——

It was fortunate that the energetic ringing of a bell afforded the waiter a pretext for leaving the room before he brought his sentence to a close. My uncle's manner warned me that a crisis was fast approaching, and I felt relieved when the door closed on the unconscious cause of his disturbance.

The most pertinacious sticklers for the good old times cannot deny that your fine old English gentleman was remarkable for his agility with his heels ; and truth compels me to state that, during the delivery of the aforewritten explanation, I was conscious of a foot in my vicinity, poising itself for an onslaught. As the door closed, Mr. Longueville sunk into his chair, and, filling a bumper from the sample of Queensbury, drained it in silence. He had proceeded as far as replenishing his glass, when, suddenly setting down the decanter, he said—

“ Hyde, it strikes me it might be as well if I *did* take coffee with my sister. While I finish this glass, go and fetch my pistols—quietly :—you understand—*quietly*.”

It was evident something sinister was in the wind, and the only hope I might have of averting unpleasant consequences, should occasion for such arrive, was in the adoption of a conciliatory manner, and compliance with the old man's humour. In his dressing-room had been deposited his case of travelling pistols, and I laid it, without note or comment, on the table before him. This he unlocked, and carefully inspected the weapons. Examining their flints, and priming himself with another bumper of port, he placed a pistol in each coat-pocket, and, rising from his seat, politely asked, "had I any objection to join a small evening party quite *en famille*?" Having expressed my readiness, we set out.

It was but a step from one drawing-room to the other: the door was thrown open with "the gentleman, ma'am, if you please." The room was a large one, and but half-lighted by a lamp that stood on a table near a sofa at its farther end, on which sat a lady reading. While, therefore, we were in obscurity, the

rays of the lamp, falling on the sofa, disclosed my mother. Though she always dressed well, on this occasion her toilette had manifestly been particularly cared for. The waiter's voice caused her to start from her seat, and, dropping her book, to pass rapidly forwards. By the time she had reached the centre of the room, we had also gained that point, and the light, serving all alike, revealed each to the other. The lady stood as if turned to stone, the gentleman regarding her with the benevolence of a basilisk. The former (I was about to say, of course) was the first to speak.

“My dear brother, what an unlooked-for gratification is this!” she exclaimed—“and Hyde, too! This is really an unexpected pleasure.”

“I fancy it is, madam,” replied Uncle Tom, leading her towards the sofa by the tips of the fingers, handling them as a man might those of one stricken with pestilence, “and equally un hoped for. You had no idea we were in England?”

“Not the most remote,” was the reply; “but”—and, not seeming to notice her brother’s manner, she continued, “tell me when did you arrive; what kind of a journey you had. Ring and call for coffee: the French, of course, have taught you the impossibility of doing without coffee and *chasse*: ‘*eau-de-vie de Dantzic*,’ or ‘*parfait amour*,’—come, confess to the latter, at all events, mon frère.”

“Madam,” rejoined the brother, “the relish for coffee and *liqueurs* is not confined to the French, nor the aptitude for making proselytes to taste. What do you say to the Germans? It’s my impression they sometimes do as much in the ‘*parfait amour*’ line as their neighbours. What’s *your* opinion?”

The motive of my uncle’s strange conduct was instantly revealed to me, and his allusion was not lost upon my mother. She appeared faint, and walked towards a window, which I opened. At the same moment a carriage drew up, and I observed a man emerge from it, and enter the house: my mother also saw

him, clasped her hands together, and exclaimed—

“ Thank God, he is come at last !”

Mr. Thomas Longueville, who had taken up his favourite position, with his back to the fire, gazed fiercely at her ; and, as steps were heard upon the stairs, drew forth a pistol from either pocket. The door opened ; some one was about to enter, and there issued from a throat, hoarse with rage—

“ Cross the threshold, Mynheer Von Dunck ! cross the threshold — and, damme, you are a dead man !”

He raised his arm, and, as I struck it aside (for passion had mastered him, and I knew not what he might do), my father was before us ! A lady lies fainting upon a sofa — an elderly gentleman hangs over her — another stands by, bristling with pistols, like the armoury in the Tower, and his hair on end — a youth is looking on aghast—the curtain falls on a scene that would have furnished a tableau for a pantomime.

The following morning assembled around

the breakfast-table a group which could hardly be expected to have been formed out of the materials of the preceding evening. The parties chiefly concerned had, apparently, kissed and made friends; while my uncle did the amiable on a large scale; though, when a Perigord pie was put on the table, he made an allusion to German sausages that might as well have been left alone.

For my part, I was really happy; spake of the household virtues like Plato; and, although I declined joining the family circle at dinner, left them impressed with the conviction that I was an exemplary young man.

That night I dined at Long's with a couple of quiet men, on curried turbot and spitched oyster-rashers (an immortal *plat !*), washed down with a peculiar claret, of which (John Long assured us) the more a man drank the more good it did him. If such was the fact, we must have been very nearly perfect when we reached Vauxhall. There, with Lydian measures in my ears, a lovely Thaïs on either hand, blessed as the gods I felt, when an ap-

partition in black approached, and, bowing himself in twain, said, "Sir, a right honourable and most noble party request the honour of your company in box No. 36." I followed whither he led; and, as I entered, became conscious that two pair of parental eyes regarded me fixedly, while a voice whispered, "Sit you down, my Socrates the second; you are remarkably drunk."

CHAPTER IX.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.

An episode on the superstitions of the mere Irish — English prejudice — Its rebuke, and award of poetical justice, all full of excellent morality, if the reader can find it out — Another episode touching quality people, whose morality is more abstruse: one would n't offend eyes or ears polite.

“ So I charm'd their ears,
That, calf-like, they my lowing follow'd, through
Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss, and thorns,
Which enter'd their frail shins; at last I left them
I' the filthy mantled pool beyond your cell,
There dancing up to the chins.”

SHAKSPEARE.

“ Then on her head they set a garland green,
And crowned her 'twixt earnest and 'twixt game.”

SPENSER.

“ Who did ever play his gambols
With such unsufferable rambles.”

HUDIBRAS.

CHAPTER IX.

As in geological formations we see veins of trap, and granite, and metal, which indicate the character of the strata they traverse, by their much or little abundance, so, in human life, there are slender currents of events running counter to the general tendencies, but without which the whole effect is not adequately rendered.

Thus, although my reminiscences will chiefly illustrate the haps and chances of a social career, memory will sometimes guide the pen (and I give it free licence) to commemorate episodes of domestic comedy, or the gravest events of this work-a-day world.

We had returned some three or four days

before from town, having left it immediately after the meeting narrated in the former chapter, when I chanced to leap a fence that skirted a wood-bound meadow to the southward of the house. There, driving the cows to the milking, about four of the afternoon, I encountered an Irish lad, a kind of cousin of Maher, whom he had enticed over, one harvest season, in hope of work ; and who, having neither substance nor shadow to lure him back to Paddyland, had been retained as a helper simultaneously by all the domestics of our liberal establishment, my father being the unconscious victim of the force.

Poor Con at once became all things to all the men, and the women too, of the servants' hall. He was Boots to the footman, knife-cleaner, &c., to the scullion and helper, stable-boy to the grooms, pig-feeder and poultry-butcher to the kitchen-maid, weeder in general to the gardener, and milkman to the dairy-maid.

For some time he bore these several honours meekly—the subordinate of the subordinates ;

it was Con "here, there, everywhere, and nowhere." But, at length, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream." Treated worse than a dog, though that dog were an Irish one, and his reminiscences of poverty allayed by overmuch feeding, he rebelled in turn against every new exaction, and, with true Hibernian pluck, vituperated each offender with a ready stream of epithets not borrowed from the London accidence. Now I don't think I had seen him more than half a dozen times in my life, yet I knew all this at second-hand from Maher.

"Be aisy now," Con was muttering to a restive *taurina*, as I approached him unobserved. "Ye're to the full worse nor any of 'em. Evul eye, indade! Murder on all and aitch of *their* eyes; and what wonder if I was in a fairy ring at home now, may-be the iday would be the thruth, if *wishing* would lay the spell on 'em. It 'od do good to every Jack Pudding among 'em, to translate 'em to a flourishing bog, and nothing but pratee skins to fill their jaws. Evul eye, indade."

"Give some kind of eye to my nag here,"

said I, dismounting from my hack ; “ I don’t care whether an *oval* or a square one, so as it sees sharply, and two would be better than one. I think his frog touched a stone in landing over that fence. Take him round, and see that no trick is played him.”

“ Your honourable lordship is it that’s come home ? Sure I’ll be glad to serve you any-how, or the baste as freely, that has always a taste of civility for a poor lad, and that knows ould Ireland better nor those ignoramuses who’ve niver had bit nor sup outside of their master’s pantry.”

He was leading the *baste* from me, when, pulling his hat quite off (for he always wore one), he said, “ If it was n’t too grate a fraydom, I’d appale to your honour, and be bould to ask a question, which was the likeliest to cast an evul eye on the *hins*, I, or fat Bunny ?”

“ On the *hins* ? What are they, tell me that first ?”

“ The *hins*, yer honour—the cock’s *hins*—the fowls that won’t lay niver an egg, though I switch them mornin’ an’ evenin’, and pep-

pered their tails nicely into the bargain, and thrust the same into the pratee lavings. But ivery mortal thing that goes wrong in the house, or out on't, it's always 'Con's doing.'"

"But *what* distemper are you accused of giving the hens, Con?"

"No more nor witchcraft itself! Mrs. Bunn says, 'I'm a pis'nous papish, and casts a spell on 'em.' I'll turn to Ireland to-morrow any-how, and lave them all to their machinations. Sorrow on iv'ry Jack and Gill of 'em all. But, yer honour, I'm proud to do the heir of the house a service, and shall wish ye good luck and duty to the last hour of my life; and glad I am to wipe the dust from your shoes, born jontleman as ye are."

"Suppose you drive me over to the Dillons'," said my lady mother, who encountered me as I crossed the little lawn in front of her morning-room. "You have no objection to visit Mrs. Verulam, your former friend, Emily Dixon?"

My consent was of course given. On our way thither, delicately touching the ear of

my mother's white pony, "Beauty," a present from my uncle Tom, and as pretty a bit of duodecimo horse-flesh as pony could be, I said, *curiously*—

"Mrs. Verulam's maiden name you mentioned?"

"Did I? I don't remember. She was a Miss Dixon—Evelina Dixon. Don't you recollect she used to stay with me when you were at Eton?"

"To be sure I do," *thought* I, but I said, "You had so many visitors!—I can account for the lady's code of morality," ruminated I. "So she is married; and to whom?"

"Oh! to a very good kind of man, who is to keep hounds, and give race balls, and make us all very gay."

I was discreet, and asked no more questions. The lady was visible, and received my mother with a cordial shake of the hand.

Mrs. Ashby Verulam had seen much of the world in her maiden state, was nearly pretty, and quite clever. She had played

her part in acted charades and *tableaux vivants*—had been dubbed a beauty by the “books” of those days, and favoured busts, casts, and miniatures of herself. Indeed, there *was* something fascinating in her little classical head, tightly braided black hair, slender waist, high shoulders and all, which excused her vanity, to men at least.

Mr. Ashby Verulam was a man of some wealth, a score of years her senior, whom she married—*for love*. He was a worthy and honourable man, and seemed to be blind to her chief peculiarity, *the gift of romancing* to an unparalleled extent. I was unaware of it also; indeed, maidens are only made melo-dramatic by marriage. In childhood and girlhood they are automata. The third act of their lives, wedding-hood, brings *character* out in full relief. I mention this lady here, for my knowledge of her was enwoven with my acquaintance with Mrs. ——, which my boyish enthusiasm for letters dignified with the name of friendship, and for whose amusement I had sacrificed so much time, and cash, and leisure.

Truly, I was then, apparently, a fair mark to the worldly, and they made good use of their butt.

“It is the bright day that brings forth the adder, and that craves wary walking.”

In my first adversities, with youth's feelings,

“Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's armies,
Quite vanquish'd me.”

Now that I have fallen on evil days, and have but the prosperity I win for myself, I am content to take life as I find it.

We dined at the Dillons', and, on reaching home late, or, rather, early, I solaced myself for a dull evening by smoking a cigar in the bright moonlight. Circumambulating the premises towards the servants' offices, methought I saw a dark object, like a man, leaning forward, or against the keyhole of the great kitchen-door. His figure seemed lengthened to an extended line in space—longer certainly than mere mortality would well warrant. I approached near to the cowering form—more near: I observed he wore a

countryman's large straw hat, and a loose wrapping great coat indicated a leanness in accordance with his great height.

Believing him a drunken fellow, on no good errand, I touched his elbow—it was as hard as a stick; indeed it *was* a stick, and so was the rest of his combustible person!—a dressed-up pole, set there to frighten the maids, doubtless. Unwilling to disturb so delectable a purpose, I soon retreated to my dormitory. I know not how long I had invoked Somnus, when, from various parts of the tenement, screeches, screams, harks, and hilloas, from the voice of my maternity to that of Mrs. Bunn, the housekeeper, rose in a graduated scale like the present corn-law, with such an uproar as must have met Sir John Falstaff at the Windsor oak.

I was not bound to leave my warm repository for such an *inferno*, sagely deciding that such noise would do as well as an army to defeat “Legion,” either substantial or unsubstantial. But though I left the hubbub to the powers of its own creation, it would not leave

me. So I donned my dressing-gown to give some one a dressing—I did not care whom ; and, hearing my own name repeated, in a lamentable voice, by my mother, I asked her “ what the row was ? ”

“ Oh ! save me, Hyde ! Thieves !—murder ! Come and protect me.”

“ But I can’t get in ! ”

“ Oh ! the door is double-locked, and I am afraid to open it,—and your father won’t move ! ”

In the hall there were ghostly faces of fright, the men brandishing oaken cudgels, the women tearing their hair and screaming, but all keeping close to each other.

“ You set of noisy rascals, what cat or dog have you shut up in the pantry, to demolish the dishes ? or what misdemeanour have you committed amongst you, that you execute this judgment upon Christian sleep ? ”

First, one of the footmen deposed that, on opening the kitchen-door, a man knocked him down, by falling over him, and would have despatched him, had his heels not saved his

head. Secondly, the dairymaid, corroborated by a groom, asserted that, in their several places of rest, they had heard unwonted sounds of lowing close to the hall-door, and, fearing the cows had broken the fences, they, supported by each other, issued forth, and followed the sounds into the shrubbery, where a dreadful groaning terrified them so that they fell on the ground, and then a shower of ordure completely covered them; in confirmation of which they exhibited visages and apparel well *manured*.

But the housekeeper's plight was the worst. She had, as she herself would have said, *flopped* down in one corner, where she looked like a hieroglyphic—half woman, half lion. She was the greatest oddity of the chapter of oddities our house comprised. An enormous head, with features closely resembling a lion, was made more picturesque by a crimped muslin cap, that fell down on either side like that noble quadruped's mane. Two little boa's feet, and two podgy paws, came out, like the cardinal points of the compass,

at each extremity of the rounded oval of her squat figure. Like a pagan god on a chimney-piece, there she sat, spouting out interjections, and pulling furiously at her elf locks.

“ Oh ! oh ! ah ! ah ! eh ! eh ! I’m a haunted woman ; I’m a murdered creature ! That villain Con ! Oh ! this comes of letting in papists. Oh ! oh ! ah ! ah ! eh ! eh ! There it is by my bedside ; there ’t ’ll be for ever ; I know it will. The great fiery eye ! ”

Seeing some clue out of the mystery, I soothed the poor fierce-looking frightened little woman, and, her terror mitigated, she fell to weeping and relating, that she had, to be sure, rated Con soundly for his dirty Irish ways ; and he threatened, in revenge, to haunt her and all of them with the evil eye ; that he said was a fairy gift in his country, and “ there, there it is,” she added, pointing towards the door, and sobbing out afresh.

“ Oh ! don’t, my dear young master, *don’t you* go to it.”

They all followed me, however, into her room, and truly there, on the pillow of her

bed, was a bladder, ingeniously painted; a coarse but unmistakeable likeness of a Brobdignag eye, while a small lantern placed within it gave the proper effect.

A horrible stench of phosphorus showed at once the origin of certain diabolical figures on the walls. At this juncture, a bellowing was heard outside, that created fresh horror, and, as I sallied forth to encounter this new absurdity, an apparition, seen in the clear equable moonlight, like to a prize-ox in bulk, but Nereus himself for humidity, rushed into the midst of us.

Sophocles tells us—

“Swift in its march
Is evil counsel;”—

but the coachman proved that swifter far is fear, even burdened with the weight of *element* in which he was disguised. The servants, mistaking him for the devil “coming among them, having great wrath,” turned tail, and with him, stumbling and roaring, gained cover.

“So in the night, imagining some fear,
How easie is a bush supposed a bear.”

Venturing into the stable, I perceived, in the soft moonlight, a great trough, so conveniently placed that it was almost impossible to escape a ducking. A bad imitation of hollow groaning attracted my attention towards one of the bins.

“Tremble for your sins, you drunken fellow—you rascal coachman ! The horses are bewitched, and spoke to ye for to spite you. Your mashter ’ll know of the dthrink you swallow the evening, and pray for your sowl, for there’s an ind of ye to-night, any way.”

I groped my way into the corner, and grasped hold of a mop of wool sticking to a human body, which I dragged out of its hiding-place.

“Down on your knees, you rascal !” said I, “and I’ll murder you for this racket, be sure of it.”

“Och ! murther, indade, thin I disarve it for offending your honourable lordship ; but, sir, ye’ll surely forgive me ; it wasn’t my intintion but to rivinge myself on iv’ry mother’s son of ’em who made poor Con a laughing-stock, and trated him worse nor a dog. Sir,

yer honour, they browbate and ridiculed Con the life of the day long, and now, when I'm in ould Ireland agen, I can turn up my nose at 'em. Surely they're mighty brave people, the English."

I put on a severe tone, rated him soundly but briefly, and, advising him to keep close, or mischief would be done him, I returned to my bed.

Little episodes such as these, however insignificant they appear, surround home with an identity as regards position and possession, never felt elsewhere, and of which the citizen of the world, as the man of many abiding-places is called, knows nothing. I have set down this humble record, because, when revolving memories of my father's house, it rose before me, invested with an interest I am fain to believe has existence in more hearts than mine. It has truly been said of the thoughts of the past—"Awake but one, and, lo! what myriads rise!" Here was one for whom the impressions of youth were almost as the events of a previous existence, recalling

unbidden the veriest trifles—the small fond fancies of long-forgotten years. Does the poet or the painter create, or simply embody lore elsewhere revealed to the spirit? Who shall tell!

CHAPTER X.

CONVEYANCING.

The philosophy of the *ars equestris*—Animal magnetism—A mad horse—Sharp practitioners on the turf—The style of *doing* business at Doncaster—Bessy Bedlam (no relation to the mad nag aforesaid)—Balzac: his system applicable to London statistics—Old Swallow Street now engulfed in Regent Street—Comfortable lodgings—A style of tenant not of the same category—A Galway call—A new character on the scene.

“ Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves.
Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.
Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.”

VIRGIL.

“ Men make their own the labour of the steer,
And flannel vestures of the sheep they shear.
The bees do gather store of honey sweet,
To make *bon-bons*
For lazy drones,
Not for themselves to eat.”

Free Translation.

“ ’Tis no scandal grown
For debt and roguery to quit the town.”

DRYDEN.

You who men's fortunes in their faces read,
To find out mine, look not also on me!

COWLEY.

CHAPTER X.

Hitherto these recollections may have seemed less germane to their indicated purpose than they ought to have been. But the early experience of the sportsman is, of all knowledge, precisely that of the least value. As the circulation of notes for small sums is interdicted by act of parliament, so should comments be restrained *àpropos* to little or nothing at all.

The boy and the youth go forth to flood and field for no object beyond that attained in the pursuit of wild enterprise and healthful excitement. To such, woodcraft, like virtue, is its own reward. Manhood comes, with its store of worldly wisdom and keen perception,

that seeks to turn to account all the issues of life, and, lo ! the speculator in pleasure rivals, in diligence and application of means to the end proposed, the merchant or the mariner who know no corner of the earth too distant for the exercise of their industry.

What stores of genius have been brought to bear on the horse-dealing of amateurs ! Management, before which Talleyrand would have hidden his diminished head, has been lavished in laying the train for a game of blind hooky, and minds that might have done honour to the woolsack have wasted their sweetness on the intricacies of a handicap.

Up to the period of my visit to uncle Tom, at Paris, I had looked upon life as on the scenes of my first pantomime. Before my return to England, if I had not learnt to regard it as a tragedy, in which all men and women are “merely players,” it had certainly struck me as a presentment wherein many of the vicarious characters were any thing but comic.

From my mother—of whom I have sketched

a slight outline—I inherited quick feelings, a sanguine temperament, and a disposition for adventure so strong, as almost to make excitement necessary to my existence—from my sire, a spirit of perseverance, or—to call things by their proper names—of obstinacy, that taught me to regard resolution—or stubbornness—as a cardinal virtue. Thus made up, I was sent by a kind but most indiscreet father, with sad odds against me, into a world, wherein to do well (I write with sorrow, but conviction of the truth), the recipe is contained in the Frenchman's prescription, "*Pour bien vivre il faut avoir un mauvais cœur et un bon estomac.*"

After a short sojourn among the household gods at B——, first having accommodated the parental position "as well as could be expected," I set out for the north, with Maher beside me, in one of Burnand's buggies (Burnand was an awful fellow at the *et cæteras* of his bills, but it must be admitted he *did* turn you out a Christian conveyance), and, in front, one of the best pieces of horseflesh it was

ever my fortune to see in single harness. As something in the experience line attaches to his history, I offer an apology for staying the narrative to introduce it here.

“ Paulo Majora,” on whom I subsequently committed foul murder by driving him at midnight into the Severn, between Tewkesbury and Gloucester, was an undoubted “*Irisher*,” as his high and ragged hips, short clean legs, and “nicked” tail, demonstrated to the knowing in the equestrian “habitat.” He came into my possession some months previous to my French excursion, in the following manner. He had been bought out of a string that was passing through Shrewsbury, by one of the coach proprietors, who found him so ferociously vicious, that the only use he could make of him was in the chaff-mill, where he was worked sometimes *a month at a spell* ! Even there he was found too dangerous, and was sent to B —— for the use of the kennels.

Being fat, they gave, I believe, thirty shillings for him, and turned him into the boiling-yard, preparatory to his being turned into

beef. There I accidentally saw him, looking all over a collar nag, barring his eye, which, as Mrs. Malaprop says, resembled that of "*an allegory on the banks of the Nile.*" On the occasion of that visit to the victualling department, I chanced to be accompanied by a favourite bull terrier, between whom and the "doomed one" a singular friendship was struck up—a kind of animal love at first sight—even Maher remarking—"Our Venom makes up uncommon to the 'knacker;' she does, by ——! I mane, it's a fact."

It seemed so monstrous to throw such an animal to the dogs, that, resolving on an effort to reform him, I caused him to be put into a shed, as the first step. On the following day I found him there, with Venom coiled up under his nose, forming a four-footed *tableau* of Damon and Pythias.

He was now transferred to a stall in the carriage stable, Venom taking up her quarters under his manger. He was next harnessed and driven in the break — Venom bounding in front, as if to show the way;

and in a very few days he stood, without even a groom at his head, before the hall-door, between the shafts of my tilbury, with Venom perched on his quarters !

I make no attempt to explain this very remarkable instance of “animal magnetism ;” it is related just as it happened. The horse, subsequently, became perfectly gentle, and, though he always went more “kind” in his work when his canine friend was his companion, I never wore an inch of whipcord on him during the three years he was my sole “gigger.”

The start for the north was in anticipation of Doncaster races, where I was about to make my *début*. Twenty years ago, the great Yorkshire meeting was in its high and palmy state. As a circulating medium, it had, probably, not its equal among all the racing rendezvous. Situated in one of the wealthiest districts of England, and the most sporting, the way money flew about upon the greensward, and I fear it must be said, on the green baize, was like a restoration of

the *golden* age. As a resort of the speculative, it certainly then enjoyed, if, indeed, it does not still, a far greater popularity than Newmarket or Epsom. There is a centralization about it favourable to business, that no other general meeting possesses; and more "*good things*" have come off there, quietly (or, at least, successfully), than at any similar trysting.

Great industry, indeed, has, of late years, been manifested in the south, to achieve something that should bear comparison with the "Bessy Bedlam" and "Plenipo" contingencies; but that which can scarcely be effected in Surrey by a stroke, however bold, comes off naturally, as it were, in York. In 1842, for example, it was announced, as sure as mathematics, that Coldrenick would win the Derby; but when he made his appearance without a vestige of "abominable viscera," and ran after his horses like the clown in the circle at Astley's, people *did* give their opinions in somewhat forcible language; while Coronation and Attila lost their Le-

gers in a manner satisfactory to the most fastidious.

This reputation procured, as I have said, pre-eminence of patronage for Doncaster among the industrious of the olden time, as well as in later days, and will probably uphold its name in future generations. The occasion of my first appearance there was one not without its catastrophe, nor without those engaged in it, whose career had, from its commencement to its end, a constant influence upon my fortunes. Does chance mingle with the operations of the divinity that “shapes our ends?” Has philosophy an answer for the question?

Monsieur de Balzac, a French writer of great celebrity, in a series of tales designed to expose the corruption and depravity of the social system of Parisian life, describes, in elaborate detail, the various quarters of that metropolis, and the distinctive grouping together of its different classes, as expressive of the gregariousness inherent in mankind.

Thus, in every city, may be marked out,

as in a map, the landmarks of each trade, profession, foreign colony, or religious sect. This is true, in its most extensive application, of London, whose tree of commerce bears universal fruit, and whose gigantic branches stretch forth to every point of the compass. From its earliest foundation, more or less altered to suit present circumstances, might be traced its various *settlements*: its Jewish quarter and its Irish, its catholic and dissenting, its legal and medical; its wealthy, idle and legislative, its industriously accumulative, or scientific quarters.

Little France and Little Britain, *Cheapside* and *Whitechapel* are, indeed, now misnomers of their respective districts; still every one acquainted with our metropolitan localities will make a pretty shrewd guess of the whereabouts of an individual, of whose country, religion, and occupation he is cognoscent.

As, in a kitchen-garden, the cook's assistant resorts with confidence to the beds and patches whereon thrive and multiply the herbs

and vegetables which are to constitute the chief merit of his stock-pot, so the London inhabitant unerringly culls from the separate tribes and colonies of the aggregate society those who contribute to the satisfaction of his need, or of his superfluity.

The language-masters for his children will be planted round Leicester and Golden Squares. The artist will be sought and found in Newman Street, or in the Kentish and Camden Town suburbs. Saville Row and its neighbourhood concern themselves with your physical; Bedford Row, its circumadjacents, and the inns of courts, with your moral obstructions. Collocated in the by-streets, around the great hotels and thoroughfares of the West End, the French emigrant of some means, the speculator and the adventurer, the *homme à bonnes fortunes* and the poor gentleman, were wont to be found as easily as one's tailor or hatter in Bond Street. There was Swallow Street, to which numbers annually migrated: there are still Jermyn and Bury Streets, and fifty others, whence, in national

confraternity, the French and their *habitués* resort to the various eating and playhouses of the vicinity.

It was, then, in a ready-furnished house in Swallow Street, that Launcelot Ridsdale, the confederate of so many of the superior class of gamblers of the country in which the spirit of gaming may almost be said to be inherent, had fixed his abode on his return from Paris.

The aspect of its interior was significative of the profession of those through whose hands wealth ebbs and flows with equal facility. The lodging-house was traced in worn and wasted furniture, in the threadbare curtains and oft-washed chintzes of sundry patterns which enclosed the *uneasy-looking* chairs and sofas of the sitting-room; in the glaring hue of the curtains, and the uncomfortable colouring of the paper with which the ample walls were hung.

That, however, which it lacked in the decorative seemed amply provided for in the items of negotiable comforts. Store of coats,

cloaks, shawls, and sundry other appliances for the service of the outward man, were strewn over couch and chair, while the goodly rows of slim-shapen flasks, ranged beneath the ponderous sideboard that occupied one square of the apartment, evinced the care that had catered for the inward.

On the rug, basking before a blazing fire—though it was yet but mid-autumn—lay some noble-looking dogs, and near it stood a harp, across which a scarf had been carelessly thrown; while a music-stool lay upon its pedals, as if overthrown by the haste with which the performer had arisen. Several vases, filled with exquisite flowers, covered the chimney-piece, and a gorgeous *bouquet*, of the rarest exotics, served as a pillow for a gigantic sleeping bloodhound.

At the point of time to which this description refers, the door had closed upon a visitor, who had not, however, advanced many steps from its threshold. He was the only occupant of the room, which had, apparently, been but recently left tenantless. There was

that about him which bespoke no want of confidence as to his reception. He was a young man of prepossessing exterior, easy carriage, and of a bearing, withal, only derived from the usages and circulation of society.

Again I must beg, or take permission, to digress. I never witnessed a flight of locusts, such as a travelled friend has depicted it to me, darkening the skies, in its progress, like the blackest clouds; blighting, with impure odours, the genial atmosphere; and, finally, pouncing on the luxuriant grain, destroying, in a few moments, the hope and the subsistence of the husbandman.

There are, however, locusts, with whose sight I am familiar enough, more pernicious than the much-abused, and, perchance, somewhat ill-used, class of drones. These latter may be said to have their appointed place, inasmuch as they are foils to the busy and the useful, to bring out in stronger relief their industry, self-sacrifice, and generosity; while your human locusts bide their time of

evil, to lay waste the produce of the earth, with a patience, a suppleness, and a subserviency to their own passions, or those of their protectors, which they can only borrow from the great father of evil himself—

“ So clomb this first grand thief into God’s fold.”

I speak of that class of persons who have superseded led. captains and professed toad-eaters in the aristocratic world. At the time of which I am writing, however, the recent closing of the temple of Janus only indicated that check to the currency of the junior members of the aristocracy which, subsequently, reached a fearful climax.

People may resort to fiction for instances of despair arising out of the ashes of hope; but is imagination capable of conceiving any condition of mortal hopelessness equal to that of the cadet of a noble family, with empty pockets and a head and heart stuffed with ancestral uplifting, who finds his views of a field-marshal’s baton reduced to those of an ensign on half pay?

Soon after the return of the army of occupation from before Paris, several scions of distinguished families disappeared from the surface of society, having contrived to keep their heads above water, up to that time, by supernatural efforts.

Chance made me acquainted with the fate of one of those mysterious vanishings, which I narrate, as it may allay the anxieties of some who still have him in remembrance. It is not very long since, being in Dublin, I was met by one of the Dalys of Galway, and, of course, invited to dinner. "You must come," said he, "for I shall have an old friend of yours to meet you—Howard Percy de Ruthyn."

"Ah!" I exclaimed—"De Ruthyn of the Guards!—how long has he been in Ireland?"

"Can't say that," answered the Daly; "but he called on me, in Connemara, *about three-and-twenty years ago*, and is staying at my house yet."

But all this while our young man of the prepossessing exterior is standing on the

threshold of the first-floor sitting-room in Swallow Street, already described.

When I call him young, perhaps I am over-considerate ; he had passed thirty some three or four years. He was unmarried — the younger son of an earl—much straitened in his resources, but, notwithstanding, the observed of the fashionable circles of the metropolis, and a star in all the sporting coteries. He stood for a few moments regarding the voluptuous chaos that reigned around, and thus soliloquized :—

“ ‘Beauty when unadorned’—she certainly is beautiful—but still her bower needed not to be quite so dishevelled—nor guarded by such luxurious dogs as these. What a heavenly slipper ! talk of Cinderella ! she could not have lodged a toe in it. Ha ! some one approaches—the step of Camilla !—what foot but her’s could thus fall like music ?”

The door opened, and one entered worthy to have been the handmaiden of Diana. Slightly colouring, she passed forwards, and took her seat on a sofa, caressing the noble

bloodhound, who rested his head on her lap. You might have sought long and far for a parallel of that pair; there was so much of life's essence—of hope—in their mien and presentment; yet both have long closed accounts with fortune :—

“One in madness—both in misery.”

CHAPTER XI.

CHARACTERISTIC ETCHING.

A scion of the fashionable and sporting *coteries*—A very perfect gentle knight—Love and Coquetry—White's—A supper in Swallow Street—Card-playing and other games—The hero in character—A sample of the Muse—Mytton as was his wont—Islington angels—Taking it cool—The “shoot” and the guard, relics of the olden time.

“ Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years
Considering and retouching Peter Bell :
Watering the laurels with the killing tears
Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to hell
Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres
Of heaven with dewy leaves and flowers : this well
May be, for heaven and earth conspire to foil
The over-busy gardener’s blundering toil.”

SHELLEY.

“ A truce with all that’s solemn and splenetic,
And give us something cruelly pathetic.”

Anon.

“ Don’t mind me, though, for all my fun and jokes,
You lords may find us bloods good-natured folks.”

MORE.

CHAPTER XI.

I do not presume to paint the scenes of my life thus presented to the reader: they are mere sketches, thrown off by the hand of a novice, whose pains-taking, peradventure, would be even less tolerable than the want of skill. Easy reading is the fashion of the day; and though we have authority for asserting that such a style is not easy writing, it is, at all events, better than Shelley's "blundering toil."

For obvious reasons, the names of the majority of those to whom these recollections relate are suppressed; many are still living; while, of those who are seen no more, few dying but left some trace which the survivors

who loved them would desire to see blotted out for ever.

Among the latter was one whose appearance was once as familiar as a household face to the sons and daughters of pleasure in Paris and London. He was the cadet of a noble family, of which it might with truth be said, that "all the daughters were fair, and all the sons brave." Twenty years ago there was no star of fashion that showed more brilliantly in field or saloon; none at odds with fortune who played more gallantly than the Hon. ——. I can remember him in Leicestershire, when, parallel with the flying pack, his course was ever "like arrow free," and where his famous cheer to those who with him once charged the flooded Whissendine was worthy a knight of olden chivalry.

These were his qualities; but, alas! for the sinister wisdom by which they were choked up. He was one of that parasitical order of which I discoursed in my last chapter—one of that class of persons who, without means, outvie the wealthiest in luxury—weak in himself,

strong by the support of others, like the plant of *radix repens* attached to a noble tree, till its sap and sinew are consumed by the blood-sucker. This man, then, "in outward semblance most majestic," the most frequent visitor of the apartments in which the present fortunes of Launcelot Ridsdale were consigned, now stood before the lovely and degraded mistress of his friend.

Caroline was still "beautiful exceedingly," in despite of her passionate and imperious temperament, and, which was singular, in despite of the nomad and eventful course of her womanly years—years few, but adventurous, whose daily passage had been rarely guiltless, and always tending towards a terrible goal, even as the turbulent torrent which leaps the rocky bed ere it plunges into the final chasm below.

Many an adverse chance—many a stormy quarrel had disjoined the destinies of Ridsdale and his fair confederate, at special conjunctures of time; but passion, or interest, or a certain accordance of character (than which few moral ties are more binding), ever again

reunited them as soon as the gamester's funds were sufficiently extensive to supply the needs of luxurious beauty.

Thus, as the wife (as some supposed her, and Ridsdale was careless enough of the suspicion), or as the companion of a notorious character, she had returned to England to attract around her half a score of the rich and worthless, or penniless and noble scions of fashion, to mislead and ruin at her caprice.

"Then Ridsdale is not up yet?" inquired familiarly of his hostess our previously described personage; while he arranged his tall person advantageously through the medium of a long and narrow glass, let into the side wall of the room.

"His bed has not received him this night," was the lady's careless reply. "He ordered his horse for a gallop an hour ago: but you will meet him here at dinner; I know he expects you," she added, with a glance which implied more than her words.

We have the authority of Bacon, that men discover themselves in trust and passion at un-

awares. Caroline was one, as *I* well knew, to take advantage of every weakness, and to be acutely observant of the tokens by which these are betrayed. This gentleman, who minutely related to me his early acquaintance with her, was one marked out as her tool, and the stepping-stone of her fortune.

"The same parties as last night, I suppose?" he said, after a pause.

"Yes, I believe so, with one other, a foreigner, a Sicilian."

"May I introduce a friend?" inquired the younger son.

"Doubtless, as many as you please," was the gracious answer.

Of that interview I learnt no more; but, on the same day, some three hours later, I was standing with my father's friend, Lord ——, at the bay-window of White's, when my companion was slapped smartly on the back, while I was addressed by name to the following effect:—

"Most elaborate Hyde! what are you discussing so gravely with my worthy cousin here

—the turf, the chase, or those slim ancles yonder, eh ? ”

We both turned, the earl to salute his dependent, whom he permitted so far to eclipse himself in the fashionable world, and I to reply to my delightful acquaintance, the Hon. ——.

“ I was only remarking what an ill-favoured fellow passed the window just now. ”

“ You are too kind by half ; but what shall you do with yourselves late this evening ? ” he asked, more particularly turning to his relative. “ Should you have no pressing engagement, I wish you would accompany me where I have *carte blanche* to introduce agreeable friends : liberal play, snug supper, pretty woman. Eh ? what say you ? ”

The noble shrugged his shoulders, and replied, “ *Comme il te plaira, vaurien*. Marston dines with us, and we’ll go together ; he will be safer under my wing than with you, B——. ”

I winced a little, perhaps, as I replied—“ Or I will look in later,” and we parted.

It was a queer *rencontre*, that night’s recognition ; but life is more full of marvellous con-

tingency than the child's magic lantern scenes of death and the devil with a curling tail.

I entered the supper-room in Swallow Street with about as much expectation of falling in with acquaintances, as of being admitted to a confidential *tête-à-tête* with the then majesty of England. I stood for a space unobserved. The scene was an impressive one. The room was such as I have described it. My acquaintance B—— was seated at the card-table with Launcelot and two others, one of whom I instantly knew again as the wild-eyed and sallow Italian of the *maisonnette*, near Versailles.

At B——'s side sat Caroline, by whom he appeared more engrossed than with his play. As host and hostess rose to greet the new comers, Ridsdale and I were at last confronted; our eyes met, and his seemed to dart forth an unquenched flame of hate: but the livid and blanched cheek recovered its hue, and, though his voice shook and sounded as if it had been heaved up from a distance, his words were amicable:

“Mr. Marston, you are welcome; you will

find yourself at home here ;” and his ghastly smile marked out Caroline and his meaning.

Even at that moment the instinct with which women disguise emotion struck me forcibly. With a cold and careless glance, Caroline half rose, and instantly reseated herself.

The play still continued, and I, for a moment, hesitated as to the course I should adopt. At length I sat down, curious to ascertain the especial motive of this *réunion*. Apparently occupied with my play, I allowed no movement of Caroline’s to escape me. There was a dash of affectation in the assumed exclusiveness with which she listened to the honeyed flatteries of B——. His manner was eager and excited, as though under the influence of wine, while an effort to banish reflection was discernible through the borrowed gaiety of demeanour.

Though I watched the cards narrowly, I detected no sign of collusion between any of the parties. Preoccupied in my observation, I attributed my own ill luck to the careless-

ness of my play, but I remember well that B—— lost a considerable sum with his usual grace, but not with his ordinary light-heartedness. We presently adjourned to supper; and, as the wine and victual did their office, we digested into better fellowship. There was an untenanted chair. Ridsdale, glancing towards it, remarked to our hostess—

“You expected that 7th hussar man, I suppose?” to which she nodded assent. No more passed on the occasion, but I had subsequent reason to recall the query.

In the meanwhile the flirtation was carried on with vigour. B—— admired the choice exotics carefully arranged within a filagree network dish, a present, probably from some admirer. Caroline selected a moss rosebud, and presented it to him, and I saw him press it to his lips. He then handed her a guitar, which constituted a portion of the miscellaneous lumber of the room, and requested her to sing, with the air of a gallant on the most perfect terms with himself.

She took the instrument from him, and, as

it were mechanically, struck some melancholy chords. I looked at her, and her eye encountered mine. It was not steady, though the flash of its expression was scarcely definable.

“ I cannot say—I *will* not say, as ladies are wont, that I lack the art, or its material, but I’ll speak the truth, which is not a lady’s wont—I am not in the vein.”

“ Perhaps Mr. Marston will sing to your accompaniment ? ” suggested B——.

“ Probably he will,” replied Caroline, looking earnestly at her instrument.

“ *A-propos* of roses ? ” I said, inquiringly, but there was no reply. I waited while one might count a hundred : indeed I thought I heard the passage of time indicated by other sounds than those proceeding from the dial on the mantelpiece.

“ You remember,” said I, turning abruptly to the player, who still drew faint notes from the strings, over which her white hand rested — “ you remember that *ranz des vaches* I taught you when I returned from Switzerland, in 1816. Will you strike the key of it, and

follow a refrain that haply may be faulty, both in melody and season? You will understand the stanzas were addressed to one who, in 'lang syne,' conferred on me a gift as fair and as fugitive as that you have but now presented to my friend B——. Probably the application will be as obvious." Thus ran my lay :

The rose that you gave me, how bright was its hue —
How it scented the gale that blew round it,
As, link'd with a twin-bud of fragrance, it grew,
Where morn in its loveliness found it!

In the pride of its beauty 'twas gather'd, and soon
The bloom and the freshness had faded,
And gone was the glory, while still it was noon,
In which the young dawn had array'd it.

A summer day pass'd: it had wither'd, and then
All gently I tended and dress'd it,
Pour'd balm on the languishing leaves, and again
Soft fragrance and lustre possess'd it.

Sweet lady! how like to that rose is this heart;
Though your smile bring no sunshine unto it,
'Twill still linger on, from the loved one apart,
If the tear of your pity bedew it.

The ultra-politeness of the old school,
which entailed on the auditory the necessity

of discharging a *feu de joie* of flattery and falsehood to the manes of every departed ditty, twenty years ago gave promise of the more Christian habit that at present prevails of permitting people to sing without being fired at.

So long as there is power in melody to awaken feeling, so long shall even a hardened nature be recalled under its influence to the strong and artless attachments of its youth. Caroline's lip quivered, and the retained tears glistened in her full dark eyes, as for a brief space they were bent on mine. The predominance of self, which led her blindly and mistakenly to follow the guidance of inclination, in lieu of principle, in every action of her life, was at that moment forgotten. I could willingly have kissed away the regret I saw depicted in her eloquent glance; and I felt I had stayed long enough in that spot. I arose to take my leave, but not before there was an understanding that we should meet the following week at Doncaster.

It had been arranged that my strange

but ever steady friend, Mytton, should give me a seat to the north; and at eight o'clock on the Saturday evening previous to the Doncaster meeting, he arrived at a racing pace at Jordan's, where I was staying, in a phaeton, the horses smoking as if they were afire.

"Jump in, old fellow," he shouted; so, being aware that the occasion was pressing, I threw myself beside him, and we set off as they do for a T. Y. C. plate.

"Are you going to make as strong running as this all through?" I asked, as we cleared a disreputable-looking neighbourhood, and *dé-bouched* into the highway near Sadler's Wells.

While I was speaking, we overtook one of the down mails, and a sharp voice from our rumble sung out:—

"Holloa! you 'York' and 'Leeds,' hold hard; there's no need to hurry."

He who spoke was that youth of nine times ninety-nine lives, who lived with Mytton— with a fractured leg, or thigh, or skull, to the end of his career.

"Is them angels?" asked the guard, in a

voice which, from half a century of northern nights and gin cocktail, sounded like the challenge of a hyperborean bear; "is them angels?"

"Reg'lar," replied the "shoot;" "it's only their great coats that hides their wings."

"There's two angels on the bill," soliloquized the midnight guardian, as Mytton and I took possession of two inside seats that were unoccupied; "but I expected to have found them at Islington."

"Shouldn't have thought it a likely beat for that sort of game," rejoined the groom.

"You're a rum un," said bruin.

"Uncommon," said the tiger.

Around the office-door at Islington stood a crowd of anxious wayfarers, two of whom, done up for the night in cloaks and comforters, approached and made parley with the coachman. Turning his head over his shoulder, that functionary exclaimed, "Why, I say, Jim, *these* be the angels; blessed but you've been and done it!"

"These here two gen'lemen," said the

guard, opening the door, and appealing to Mytton, "want them there two places."

"No doubt about it," said the squire; "and so do we."

"But they've booked themselves at the Angel here, and paid their fares three days ago," chimed in the book-keeper; "we've got their money, and — —."

"All the better for you," replied Mytton; "you'll now sack four fares instead of two."

"Do you think we live by robbing the public?" quoth the man of way-bills.

"*You* call it 'shouldering,'" explained the man of logic.

"If you don't give 'em up," urged the guard, "they say they'll take four horses to Doncaster."

"They'll be lucky gentlemen if they contrive to be so accommodated," said Mytton; "my servant wrote to bespeak posters a week ago, and there wasn't a donkey that would go in harness to be had for love or money, between the stones' end and Newark: there,

shut the door, and tell your friends to make themselves comfortable : if they give me their address, I'll send them a return list as soon as the Leger is over."

CHAPTER XII.

DONCASTER.

The Leeds mail—Doncaster High Street on the Sunday preceding the meeting—A recipe for a slight thirst—Green meat—How to get rid of loose coin—How to make up after a long travel—A drawing-room scene hard by the Salutation—An anecdote of the well-known Major C——, of the “Mock Election”—The eve of the races.

“Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame ;
And, to this day, from Venice to Verona,
Such matters may be probably the same :
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a ‘cavalier servente.’ ”

Beppo.

“ The value of a thing
Is just as much as it will bring.”

Old Saying.

“A young gentleman accommodates himself to the innocent diversions of fashion.”

LOCKE.

CHAPTER XII.

Since the days of Milton, worse language, probably, never fell from angels' mouths than that poured forth at the door of the coach-office, by the pair spoken of in the last chapter. Indeed, the bard of Eden might have added some gems to his vocabulary, had his whereabouts on that occasion been Islington instead of Paradise.

Maledictions, like showers of poisoned arrows, hissed through their clenched teeth; they swore—but our volume not professing to deal in ethics, we refrain from particularizing, and proceed with our narrative, even as the “York and Leeds” did towards its destination.

As we glided off, performing our *galope* to the music of the guard's yard of tin, my companion, drawing a Welsh wig over his ears, and burrowing into his corner, thus bespoke me :—

“What a shocking thing is ingratitude ! What horrible reprobates those men must be ! —fellows for whom we have done a greater kindness than their best friends ever dreamt of !—anathematizing their benefactors after a fashion that might astonish a regiment of heavy horse ! It would be a fitting judgment were Providence to throw in our way, on next year's Derby, every shilling we save them on this year's Leger. The cuckoldy knaves ! What business have *they* in the north ? And now good night ! I always feel drowsy in a carriage ; it's the only place in which I ever know what it is to take my natural rest in comfort. Somehow or another, I never can sleep in a bed. To be sure it's not very often I make the experiment.”

The reader, being in possession of the fact that these recollections refer to a score of

years ago, will have no difficulty in understanding that, although the following morning was that of the Sabbath, we found the High Street of Doncaster more like the square of St. Mark's during the carnival, than the resort of the sober citizens of a discreet English borough. Not then, as now, had orthodoxy taken the chronology of the turf under its episcopalian wings, and so adjusted the occurrence of certain meetings peculiar to the aristocracy, as to shield from all jeopardy the morality of the nobility.

These, however, were days of grace for neither lords nor commons; and, scarcely had we returned to the perpendicular from the figure of Z, which we had been describing during the last sixteen hours, than we found ourselves surrounded by a crowd as motley as the population of a masquerade.

However, as it was high noon of a sunny Sunday, being myself surmounted by an ancient Palais Royal casquette, in colour and cock resembling a cardinal's hat in convulsions, while my friend's noble front the "sem-

blance of a worsted clout had on," we had no reason to be fastidious, and proceeded unmolested to our apartments, in a guise which, on any other occasion, would have secured us a lodging in the round-house.

I have often wondered how it happened that, among the universes of books with which I have come in contact, not one, to my recollection, even hints how the animal man ought to be treated, after having undergone, during the space of a summer's night, an incessant process of personal violence, in an atmosphere containing scarcely as much oxygen as would preserve a frog from fainting.

What though mails are no longer of the things that be, are there not railway carriages, wherein, during the watches of the night, the lieges, whom chance or choice lead to travel by iron, are submitted to villanous airs, to say nothing of the motion which, on certain lines I could mention, very much resembles that peculiar to the ocean, "when the stormy winds do blow?" Therefore do I volunteer to be thy physician, O wayfarer

Let it be had in mind that I do not design my prescription for your regular locomotive Sardanapalus—a gentleman, who, in his transits, passes from the castle of one noble to the abbey of another; my ambition being only to minister to such as seek to take their pleasure at their inn.

The traveller in this category having, (we will assume) for the space of twelve hours, undergone much from rough *portage* and the want of fresh fragrance, finds himself in company of a leathern portmanteau (or certain carpet-bags, as the case may be), deposited in the chamber of some rural caravansary. He who arrives in a great city has every thing prepared to his hand, the only condition of his comfort being, as George Robins would say, that his arrangements are made “regardless of expense.” And, here, to show the necessity of caution in matters of charge, I venture upon a digression, which, should it not prove particularly amusing, the reader will tolerate for sake of the moral.

About the period to which this history re-

lates, it came to pass that a friend of mine, being in exigency of funds for his necessities (a circumstance, indeed, that by no means exclusively affected that particular individual of my acquaintance), turned his face one November morning towards that auriferous region known to the youth of this metropolis as Burlington Gardens.

Where or how the antecedent twenty-four hours were passed, I, unfortunately, am unable to declare, but it may be sufficient to state, that noon was fast approaching as he turned into Bond Street from Oxford Street, his inward and outward man bearing the relation to each other that Hecla does to Iceland; in short, though surrounded by an atmosphere tending towards zero, his coppers were hard upon the boil.

Ill-natured people may draw ill-natured conclusions from these premises, and I don't see how they are to be prevented.

Well, pressing onwards for the golden coast in this state of internal temperature, our "friend in need" espied in the window of

one Owen, a fruiterer, certain vegetable temptations, which, in a similar case, might have served as pleas of justification for the back-sliding of our common mother.

These were sundry wicker contrivances called pottles—overflowing with luscious berries, more exquisite a thousand times than the golden pippins of the Hesperides. Imagine the effect of *cornucopias* of strawberries in November upon the proprietor of an œsophagus at fever heat; —“hissing hot; think of *that*, Master Brook.”

The gentleman with the throat on fire did as any other gentleman in the same predicament might have done: he stepped in, and asked the price of Mr. Owen's berries.

“Seven shillings an ounce,” said the fellow behind the counter, accenting the two first words, while the two latter were inaudible to the inquirer, whose sense of hearing was not the most acute of the five. The urgency being great, the customer seized the fruit, and, having devoured a couple of pottles, pro-

ceeded to deposit fourteen shillings in liquidation of his reckoning.

“ Beg pardon,” said the shopman, “ you’ve eaten thirteen ounces, and there’s four pound eleven shillings to pay.”

If ever there was an excuse for negotiating a trifle of discount at one hundred per cent., surely it was after such an episode in life as this.

In a few minutes the sufferer was closeted with the usurer. The money-lender, of course, “ had just parted with the last shilling he could spare ; but there was a party in Covent Garden for whom he occasionally acted, that would advance a couple of hundreds, on the condition that a few chests of oranges were taken as part cash.”

At this intimation the borrower looked as grave as he was able.

“ My most excellent friend,” he observed, “ I have already this morning done as much in the greengrocery line as a moderate-minded person need desire ; nevertheless, the coin I must have, if I undertake to eat your St.

Michaels as well as purchase; so, give me the indispensables, and I'll sign and seal."

"How is it you get rid of your money so fast?" asked the sage of thrift, taking an acceptance at three months for two hundred, and handing over a check for ninety (including the price of the fruit, which he took to as a private venture;)—"how you contrive to spend at such a rate is incomprehensible to me."

"Good Shylock," returned the youth of unthrift, "pay as I did half an hour ago—four pounds eleven shillings for a mouthful of raw vegetables, and, if your taste inclines to green meat, you'll soon unravel the mystery."

To return to the wearied wayfarer: having reached thine inn, or lodging, beset with cramps and side-stitches, that do "pen thy breath up," if there be no bath within easy access, straightway put a bed in requisition, (be it sunrise, noon, or sunset) and command that it be made hot—not tepid—there is no virtue in lukewarmness, moral or physical.

Enter thy sheets when scarce thy cuticle can endure the fiery ordeal ; and, when the first singe is past, and you begin to burn gently, engulf a posset of any white wine — Madeira is the best — as redolent of spice as Araby the blest—heated so that it seeth in its descent to the ventricle. Anon thou shalt be covered with a profuse moisture — become torpescent — slumber — peradventure snore : let none disturb thee.

Tired nature having compassed her repose, thou wilt awake. Then, there being a cheerful fire in the chamber, in front of it sponge thyself from head to heel with spring water, as cold as it can be had, and, after a copious applicative of the liquid, ply the coarsest of coarse towels to thy surface with unflinching zeal and perseverance.

Scrub on till thou dost “thy hide incarnadine, making the buff one red,” as Shakspeare says. Assume thy raiment, and descend to the refectory. Whatever animal food liketh thee best—let the collops be underdone—lay on, and foul shame be to thee if thou cryest

“ enough ” before thou hast administered to the flesh-pots a lesson they shall not soon forget. If the feast be breakfast or dinner, crown it with a slight libation of veritable hollands or cognac ; then go forth and do thy *devoir*—an thou beest not in the mood, thou art without hope in this world.

As it ever has been, and, probably, ever will be, people visited Doncaster in the year 1822 to witness the celebration of an event whose issue had been arranged some months before. Indeed, of the many Legers that have figured as foregone conclusions, the one in question is an eminent instance. It was known that trials had taken place which made certain horses as safe as if they had never been born. Among these the most notorious was one that had come off at Parlington, the seat of Mr. Gascoigne, in which the favourite, Corinthian ; Violet ; a grey colt, belonging to the Duke of Leeds (that, I believe, never had a name), and Theodore ran—wherein the latter was beaten some two hundred yards.

The consequence of this was, that Mr. Petre, the owner of Theodore, considering his chance as utterly disposed of, was said to have sold his book to Mr. Marmaduke Wyville (*à l'Irlandaise*)—that is to say, by giving a premium to have it taken off his hands. Mr. Petre's career was, perhaps, the most brilliant that ever fell to the lot of any man of his standing on the turf—yet it was a ruinous affair. He won the Leger four times, and is reported never to have turned one to account: he began it with Theodore, by Woeful: what an ominous ancestor for a racing stud!

Launcelot Ridsdale occupied one of the best houses on the terrace below the “Salutation,” on the opposite side of the road, and there, in company with the “7th Hussar man,” I found myself at the close of the afternoon.

Strong as the influence of circumstances is upon the whole tenor of existence, it operates with far greater force upon our early years. I felt a natural disgust for Ridsdale's society and character; I despised, while I pitied, the presiding deity of his most questionable orgies:

still, Fate, as the foolish call it, but, in fact, that fatal facility with which inexperience floats on the current of circumstance, made me continually flutter among the crowd of moths, so few of which escaped unscathed from their dangerous circle.

I am not writing a *beau ideal* of what the world ought to be—I am not going to speculate about men's motives—I do but relate facts as they happened, and, ere the actor suffers in reputation, let those who would condemn remember the scenes through which they may have fretted their own hour upon life's stage.

In a drawing-room, all flowers, lap-dogs, ermine mantillas, pale men about town, plumed bonnets, rosy squires, and laughter, sat “the intellectual queen of all.” And there stood one listening to the meretricious turn, the startling *double entendre*, with which she warped to her purpose the babbling emptiness of the fools around her—she, from whose young heart he had won the first fresh feelings that flowed forth, pure as the waters from the rock

of the desert, when touched by the hand that led Israel from her captivity.

Caroline, as usual, was alone ; it seemed as if Ridsdale knew that his presence acted as a restraint upon her. The coarse link of sense no longer formed a portion of the chain that held them together ; passion, the counterfeit of love, had ceased to plead its wretched extenuation for a union begun in insensible vice, and continued in sordid iniquity. With all my consciousness of her worthlessness, still her presence had a fascination that I could not, or, perhaps, would not resist. She had the secret of investing the ordinary details of life with a charm, and divesting them of their grossness—a secret that woman has, alone, ever possessed—and but rarely is the prerogative vouchsafed. To her it stood in place of every womanly virtue ; alas ! for poor human nature, that it proved so acceptable a proxy.

We dined with her ; for Ridsdale scarcely seemed to belong to the party, and the *réunion* in the drawing-room was, certainly, a pattern

for a tea-party. It consisted of a dozen or so of merry mortals, determined on being happy—and a good resolution goes a long way. There were three or four very handsome women among them, one of whom was the lovely Eliza ——, at that time appropriated by Lord S—— O——.

In reference to that *affair*, an incident occurred in the course of the evening, remarkably illustrative of the important results that so often arise out of trifles. The well-known Major C——, then a model of manly beauty, was one of the guests, and, as betting was the order of our society, he was not likely to have been an idle looker-on. There being something in Lord S——'s book that, no doubt, admitted of improvement, he canvassed the company for a customer, and at length applied to C——, saying, "Come, you'll take my bet, Captain C——, I'm sure."

"I wonder who would *not* take your 'Bet,' my lord," replied the soldier, with a bow to the fair Eliza.

That bow did its office: in a few months

the proposal thus significantly made was accepted, and a connexion commenced which terminated in the incarceration of the gallant during the whole prime of his life, and, eventually, in the violent death of both the lady and her lover.

As I intimated, there was a good deal of business mingled with our pleasure that evening: the most industrious in backing the impression made by the avowed sale of Petre's book being C——, who had followed in Caroline's train from town, and was now unequivocally enacting her *cavalier servente*. As the horse he desired to lay against was at something like 100 to 1, he was enabled to "get on" a little fortune with the small circle of speculators that formed her *coterie*.

After a light supper, discussed among *bon-mots* of a similar character, we separated at an early hour. On the threshold of the door, with a cigar alight, stood C——. "This Leger," said he to me, blowing the fragrant odour leisurely to the winds, "will make or mar me;" and so it did.

CHAPTER XIII.

DONCASTER RACES.

A lament for the pageantry of the turf—The physiology of racing—Anecdote of Mr. Edward Petre—Also of Beardsworth—Also (but by no means like *ways*) of Mr. Mostyn—A *rencontre*—A glimpse of auld lang syne—The sisters—The brothers in evil fortune.

“ Who can endear
Thy praise too much? Thou art heaven’s Leger.”
HERBERT.

“ The merry world did on a day
With his trainbands and mates agree
To meet together.”
HERBERT.

“ Oh ! these encounters !”
Troilus and Cressida.

CHAPTER XIII.

The turf, though infinitely more important as a speculative engagement, and far more generally popular as a sport, than it was at the commencement of the present century, has been shorn of much of its provincial pomp and circumstance, by the changes in the style and economy of life brought about during the last five-and-twenty years.

Those who can remember Doncaster Races when the Devonshires, Fitzwilliams, Harewoods, Beaumonts, and other northern corporations, were wont to shed lustre on the Leger day, will admit that it has lost quite as much as a gala as it has acquired in the superior character of its racing. The disap-

pearance of coaches and six, with outriders, and such like appendages of vanity, indeed, is far from being a degeneracy that we should regret—but not so the foreign indifference of equipage, which, fast treading on its kibes, brought on the vandal irruption of Broughams, Clarences, and other varieties of one-horse abominations, now to be seen overrunning Rotten Row, in grim defiance of the Animals' Cruelty Society.

Whether we are to attribute the present unpopularity of horse-flesh to the rise of steam, or the fall in the medium of circulation, I leave political economists to settle ; I only venture to observe, with the fact before their eyes, that within a quarter of a century they have fallen from half a dozen coursers to a solitary steed of all work, our legislators should hesitate before they denounce the “ bow-wow ” barouche. When the horse shall have become as obsolete as the megatherium in our streets, peradventure they will be glad enough to “ go to the dogs,” to say nothing of the tendency of their present courses.

Well, what though the splendour of the Leger day has, in modern time, grown small by degrees, it was one unclouded blaze of living light on the anniversary of 1822. The Derby a score of years later—the Derby that Coldrenick was selected to win upon the principle that “bad’s the best”—was not held a more complete foregone conclusion than was the Leger aforesaid, so far as regarded what could *not* win. One party fancied Corinthian, another Muta; but every living thing in Yorkshire pronounced Theodore as safely disposed of as if Actæon’s hounds had dined off him.

The facts (I write for the information of the rising generation) that led to such belief were in this wise: James Croft, the John Scott of those days, trained Corinthian; Violet, a grey colt belonging to the Duke of Leeds—never named as far as my memory serves; and Theodore, for the St. Leger of 1822, and this quartette came in first, second, third, and fourth for the race. A few days before the meeting, he tried them at Parlington, in Mr. Gascoigne’s park, and Theodore was beaten a

couple of hundred yards, and his chance was, of course, deemed a superlatively forlorn hope.

For this reason, seeing that he, Croft, had feud with Jackson, the well-known northern jockey, and because he desired to work his loss and discomfiture, he resolved to put him upon Theodore, who, what with his corns and flabby feet, rejoiced in a gait between that of an alderman with peas in his shoes, and a beauty of the celestial empire.

But the principle of compensation (in my philosophy, the eternal law of nature)—to which men have given the title of Providence—brought it to pass that out of the very materials employed to damnify and discomfit should naturally proceed the effects to neutralize the mischief designed, and to exalt the cause they were intended to degrade.

Without intending any slight to Providence by the precedence, I have a little episode at hand, relating to the vicissitudes of a racing career, that may have a salutary effect (you are nothing unless you are moral in these days), and therefore I set it down before I

proceed to the narrative of the catastrophe of my compensation theory.

When it became first known that Mr. Edward Petre had fallen into difficulties, some years after the date of these memoirs, I happened to have a conversation with a friend on the subject, who said that all his embarrassments had their origin in his attachment to the turf.

“By Jove,” said I, “if a man is to be done for by winning three Legers in succession, then the Irishman was a true philosopher after all, who, having fallen into difficulties after he won a small sum in the lottery, declared he should have been utterly ruined had he drawn a prize of £20,000.

“You argue,” replied my friend, “like one who believes every thing to be such as it seems; which is just the way to break your head or your heart, in the planet you were born to inhabit. Now, I’ll tell you the circumstances of this case, just to show you how little the real facts of racing are known, except to those engaged in them.

“In 1828, Petre, as you know, won the

Leger with the Colonel ; that horse he purchased from Mr. Marmaduke Wyville, with the stipulation that, if he won the Leger, Mr. Wyville should be entitled to half the stake. Some time antecedent to the race, he was tried with Velocipede, the result being that he was beaten a hundred yards or thereabouts ; this was a poser. Velocipede was known to be a flyer, and here was proof positive that, barring accidents, they had no earthly chance with him. After a good deal of diplomacy, it was finally settled that, should either of the horses win, the stakes should be divided between Mr. Armytage, the owner of Velocipede, and Mr. Petre.

“The day arrived, and Velocipede (whose legs were always in a doubtful state), was dead amiss, and the Colonel won. Hereupon one half of the stakes went into Mr. Armytage’s pocket, and the other into Mr. Marmaduke Wyville’s ; while to Mr. Petre’s share fell the honour of winning the Great St. Leger, and also the gratification of paying all the expenses incident to the victory.”

The tide in the affairs of men, of which

Shakspeare speaks, has reference to all the employments of life—leading the industrious and good appropriator of its flood “on to fortune.” Of all its currents, not one carries so much scum at the top as the turf. Its professors in the good old times were far from large capitalists ; now-a-days, all the stock in trade your leg requires is plenty of brass—in the face—a Newmarket “cut-away,” two yards of satin for his neck, and a Macintosh without a waist. And what more does he require? The only issues whereon money is staked, which the speculator can regulate according to his pleasure or his profit, are those of racing. The reader smiles at the assertion—he knows better—“most excellent wretch”—*le vrai moyen d'être trompé c'est de se croire plus fin que les autres.*

On my arrival at Doncaster for the meeting of 1832, rumours were rife that “Ludlow,” who had been backed very freely at 12 to 1, was likely to give those who were on him a fall. I forthwith sought out Beardsworth, to whom he belonged, and he made no scruples

about the true state of the affair. He told me his horse was for sale, at £5000, "*to race or to boil.*" The effect of this announcement was to send him back to 100 to 1 in the odds, as well as to get up an awful sensation. What the real motive of Beardsworth was is not clear;—certainly not a sale, as that might have been done under the rose, and ten times more plunder made of it than by any public move. I believe a private explanation was offered to Lord Uxbridge, one of the stewards, but it would not be listened to; the only result of the row being a change in the jockey appointed to ride him, and Wright—a skilful and honest man—was put up.

He lost (and so, of course, did his backers), and I allude to the circumstance merely to call observation to the melancholy truth of our not having grown better with increase of years. The owner of the favourite for a popular race has, since this chapter was begun, sold his horse, with the stipulation that the buyer should not "do" his (the seller's) particular friends; thereby showing that he un-

derstood the purchase was made for the purpose of a general robbery. Not an uncourteous syllable has been breathed against this in high places; yet Wagstaff was not allowed to give three thousand guineas for Fang, "and no questions asked."

On the day before the race for the Leger, in 1835, a gentleman waited on Mr. Mostyn, and bade him *seven thousand guineas* for the "Queen of Trumps," by no side wind, but, "like a crocodile, with the bank notes in his hand," as Tom Hood might say. Mr. Mostyn knew enough of the world to understand that cash was cash, though Beelzebub held it on the fork of his tail; he also knew what honour was, and, standing on no punctilio, expressed his willingness to sell, but stipulated that his mare should run—and *run to win*. That, however, being no part of the gentleman's bond, the negociation fell to the ground.

This attempted *bargain* made but little noise; that effected on a Chester cup favourite for 1843 passed almost *sub silentio*: for

it is strictly within the laws at present affecting the turf, that any one having laid against a horse may buy him—convert his chattels into cat's-meat—appear at Tattersall's on the *settling*-days for the races in which he was engaged, and demand the bets lost in consequence of his having been boiled, precisely as if he had raced and been beaten !!

Our “morality” ended, we turn to our case of providence, as exemplified in the Leger of 1822. Soon after noon, Mytton and I had mounted our hacks, and moved leisurely towards the course, descanting jocosely on the different equipages in our way. Of a sudden, the butt-end of my friend's whip touched my elbow.

“Hyde, my good fellow, turn this way. That mulberry-coloured barouche contains one of the prettiest girls you ever beheld. She was at Harrowgate last month, and I never looked upon her without feeling the better for it : just as a saint, you know, would fall into an ecstasy at a peep of heaven in his dream.”

Nothing loth, I turned my horse's head, and followed the carriage track towards the grand stand. In my course through life, I have found a queer coincidence of persons and events, as following or fulfilling its general design. Thus, what the Turk calls "kismet," and the disciple of Kant terms "the chain of circumstances," seemed to checker this day's plan of careless amusement with its more ultimate purport. Mytton gained his object, the aforesaid mulberry vehicle; but an averted bonnet, and an envious white silk parasol, completely shut out the pleasant prospect promised me by my friend's enthusiasm.

The yellow plumes, and face to match, of a benign-looking elderly lady, who was the fellow-occupant of the carriage, did, by no means, compensate for our disappointment; and, as every effort to obtain a glimpse of the withdrawn countenance proved abortive, I began to conclude there was a determined avoidance of the rencontre on the part of the lady. My friend whispered me, that it was "no go;" and, as we drew off, observed,

“ If that girl had a Gorgon’s head, she would have turned us into statues by this time.”

“ Adonis and the Gladiator,” said I.

Slowly parading the centre of the race-ground was the equipage of Caroline, surrounded by a numerous *cortège* of admirers. Foremost rode the gallant B—— C——, who had apparently forgotten, in the pursuit of the lady, his heavy stake on the issue of the “ Leger.” The brow of my quondam mistress wore an anxious and restless expression, and her dark eye was fierce in its lustre. Did I mistake its direction—that it was following the wheels of the mulberry barouche with intense and painful interest? I thought not, and the event proved me right in my conjecture.

I rode up to pay her my *devoirs*. They were received softly and graciously, and the while her gaze interrogated mine, most speakingly.

“ You wish me to make you *au fait* to the capacities of the runners, that your glove-bets may be successful?” I said in reply to her look.

“ Yes, any thing—that is, stay where you are as long as you will, like a good creature,” she replied, in a half earnest, half flighty manner.

“ My riddle is read,” returned I, laughing ; “ you have encountered the pig-faced lady, or the man of the cerulean countenance, who looks as if he had swallowed the ‘ intensity of blue,’ from Sappho to Joanna Baillie inclusive ; and, in either of the cases, you are glad to get as many skreens around you as possible.”

“ Your guesses fall wide of the mark ; yet I *have* a purpose,” she replied, absently ; but, relapsing into indifference, she turned towards her shadow, C——, with her old coquetry, and, in the play of her flirtation, forgot her cause or causes of uneasiness.

And now the business of the day commenced in right earnest. The grand stand had filled with beauty and fashion. Each betting man was at his post ; and strained eyes and eager exclamations, rapid comments and loud huzzas, or half-suppressed oaths,

might be seen and heard by the thousand cool spectators.

The important moment had arrived, and a field of twenty-three gathered for the start. The odds had been laid to a very large amount, by those behind the curtain, against Theodore at 100 to 1. Old Croft, to "feed fat his grudge" as aforesaid, put on the cripple the veteran Jackson, who rode with tears in his eyes to the post.

At the word "go!" the ancient equestrian, in his rage and despair, darted in the toasting forks, as Jupiter was wont to launch his lightning of that ilk. Probably, as two negatives make an affirmative, the horrible suffering of his sides, joined with the pain in his feet, restored him to soundness on the instant; or it may have been some unknown operation of animal magnetism or galvanism, which recommissions the nervous systems of the defunct. Whatever the cause, the effect was, that the 100 to 1 outsider jumped off with the lead, was never caught, and won, to the awful dismay of the goodly company by which I was surrounded.

In the excitement, I had been wholly intent upon the course and its actors, and had followed the fortunes of the day with the enthusiasm of the young turfite, when my observation was arrested by the words of a stranger at my side, addressed to two others, in answer to a previous remark:—

“Look about you, and I’ll bet a thousand you’ll find nothing to compare with her in attraction. Her hair clusters like sun-rays, and her eyes are the skies between them.”

I followed the speaker’s gaze towards the grand stand, to which we were close; and, next to the elderly lady of the yellow plume, stood the idol of my boyish passion—the sister of Caroline—the innocent-eyed Charlotte. There she was, fifty times as bewitching as ever, with her rich golden ringlets, and her form matured to womanhood, and her glad expression that was not of the world, but her own heart; mine leaped within me at the recognition.

At length our eyes met, and hers were as quickly withdrawn, with what would have been

anger in another, but in her was only a reproachful tenderness, the crimson of her cheeks fading like the rosy twilight of a summer's eve.

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Time, that visits the harvest of our existence but as a "worm i' the bud," comes to its young spring days crowned with bud and blossom. Oh! the passing loveliness of that brief interval of life, when the glass is poised ere its sands are turned for their downward current!

I stood by her until she was again in her carriage, and then followed it. Another moment, and the equipage of Caroline was entangled in that of her sister. They also recognised each other; and, as I sprang forward to avert the consequences, the cry of Charlotte smote upon my ear. "Caroline!—my sister!" she exclaimed; and the agonized look that accompanied it smote upon my heart. I turned my horse quickly from the crowd, and overtook Mytton and B—— C——, as they rode together from the ground. The former—whom fortune could never move—observed,

“ I’ve lost the odds to ten pounds, which, according to Cocker, amount to £1000—worse luck now better another time.”

His companion appeared not to sympathize with this philosophy : he spoke not ; but his look seemed to say, “ Coming events cast their shadows before.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BENCH.

Septembrizing in Shropshire—A flourish anent ancestry; doing a little antiquarian—A sketch of a squire as he ought to be—A companion representing his son in the character of a modern ‘free and easy’ gentleman—The bench—Pity the poor debtors—A design after *the original*—Life—Taste—And the musical glasses.

“That part of tyranny that I do bear,
I can shake off at pleasure.”

Julius Cæsar.

“I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house.”

Hamlet.

“If I had a thousand sons, I'd teach them to eschew
thin potations, and addict themselves to sack.”

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER XIV.

Character, incident, situation, conduct, and development, are the agents wherewith the writer of fact or fiction gives effect to his picture of many-coloured life. It is in the boldness and skill with which they are treated, and the harmony with which they are combined, that we detect the hand of the master.

Small detail long drawn out, and adhesion to time and place, as if they were being deposed to on oath, constitute the style of composition in literature, known, in painting, as "the teaboard school:" therefore, while I profess to regulate the chronology of my events to the best of my power, for any anachronisms in the grouping of my *dramatis*

personæ, I trust I may be allowed to plead *papier maché* in mitigation. This peroration will, probably, have prepared the reader for a premeditated violence against the strict rules of dramatic action ("all the world's a stage"), and it may be he is right: all I pledge myself for is that, if it be antedated, the bill's a true bill, nevertheless.

At the close of the Doncaster Meeting, I returned into Shropshire, and found things as I had left them—indeed, as they had probably been since the founder of our race sat himself down on the banks of the Severn, on his return from those of the Boyne.

This worthy, according to family tradition, was a general in Schomberg's division of William's army, when that monarch disposed of James II., on the 1st of July, of "glorious, pious, and immortal memory." On the authority of that report it was stated also that, when William of Nassau was wounded in a skirmish, at the Boyne water, my ancestor got the better of James in a personal encounter, and as he was the only one by whom

that king was known to have been personally chastised, except his wife,¹ hence the name of Hyde became a christian symbol of the Marstons.

However that was, B —— Hall, together with 700 acres of fair arable and pasture, was held by the first-born of that denomination—the issue of holy wedlock; (had “happy” been the condition of its legality, would there have been a legitimate heir in the second generation?) the first possessor being a grim ancient, accoutred like a parish beadle, with a sword on his thigh which would have astounded Guy of Warwick, and a face on his shoulders which, had it been in the cellar instead of the picture gallery, would have effectually prevented there being a drop of sound beer on the premises.

The vinegar-visaged old warrior, however, had a rather jovial idea how a country commissariat ought to be ordered, and had handed

¹ James the Second married a daughter of Lord Chancellor Hyde.

down to his descendents, as a social code for their rural adoption, a system of feeding, by which they had continued to adhere as orthodoxly as to church and state. By this it was enacted that, in the servants' hall, there should be ale and beef for breakfast ; beef and ale for dinner ; ale and beef for tea ; and beef and ale for supper : while the order of soup, fish, and poultry ; sirloin, saddle, and chine ; wine, beer, and spirits, to be observed above stairs, was as clearly defined as if it had been drawn out by a professor of mathematics.

It mattered not whether I had been from home a year or a day ; wheresoever chance placed me, it only required that the hour of the day, and the day of the week, should be given, to enable me to declare how, at the moment, every pair of jaws were employed in my father's establishment. For this reason I said that, on returning from Doncaster races, I found every thing in *statu quo* as they had remained, very likely, since the family foundations were laid.

The same, too, with a slight allowance for

circumference and tint, was the master of the mansion — kind, choleric, considerate, and unreasonable as ever — his heart as little altered as his pigtail.

The intercourse between an English gentleman and a son who has put off childish things, and become a man, is, perhaps, the most humanizing and beautiful association to be met with in the whole sphere of refined civilization. My father, indeed, was, on occasions, somewhat too energetic for the fastidious; yet, though now and then indulging in hilarious familiarity, when the scene and the society sanctioned it, at the head of his table and in his drawing-room he exhibited all the high breeding of one of Louis the Fourteenth's courtiers.

The evening of my arrival we dined *tête-à-tête*; and the arrangements made, when the cloth was drawn, convinced me that something more than ordinary was about being discussed. The customary jug of claret, with its rollicking spout and handle, and laughing liquor within, was superseded by a grave,

sententious looking decanter of port, that wine being the Helicon of my father's inspiration.

Was it his design to enter, after dinner, upon any inquiry of solemn import, such as morals, metaphysics, the preservation of foxes, quarter sessions, or vermin trapping — so surely did Moran lodge a bottle of black-strap under his nose, the butler, in this case, standing in the relation of the bellows-blower to the organist. Thus placed, the following discourse commenced — the liberal reader bearing in mind that, during every interval of it, the lecturer filled a bumper, and that the wine was full-bodied.

“ Hyde, fill your glass ; fine gentleman as you are, port won't poison you after Michaelmas. The king ! and may no true man ever flayour the toast with worse tippie ! I want your ear a few minutes on family affairs. The season is at hand when something must be determined on as to your future concerns in life. To this extent I can influence it. Should you desire to become a hero, I'll fur-

nish you with the means as far as a cornetcy of dragoons.—Immerge your upper lip in your glass; it will promote the growth of your moustaches.

“ If your taste incline towards theology, I can set you up as a curate in a serious neighbourhood. I do not ask whether you would adopt the profession of the law, because I know you to be a gentleman. The practical professions, of course, we leave to surgeons and carcass butchers. But, should you propose to lead a rural life, how is it to be arranged? Well as I love you, I don't wish you to establish yourself here, at least for a few years. Perhaps it is always convenient for fathers and sons to be separated for a season: even were it not so, this neighbourhood is hardly the place for you just now.

“ Nay, my boy, I am not about to revive unpleasant subjects—bye-gones are bye-gones—so, indeed, is your friend the major, and his amiable daughters, to *their* friend the devil, as I hope and believe.—You assume that cut-

throat expression, I suppose, as anticipatory of the cornet.—Now to the material point; exchequer—I am three bumpers a-head of you: how soon modern wine-glasses find the bottom of the decanter—ring for another bottle.

“ You must begin with fifty pounds a quarter. I can’t do more for you during the life of your excellent grandmother. She has five hundred a-year, and an asthma depending principally upon the season. Her jointure devolves to you, but there is a better expectancy in reversion. I have had a letter from your uncle Longueville, in which he announces, without reservation, his intention of making you his heir, and his fortune is much larger than I had reason to suppose.

“ As he has views for you in relation to the position that would attach to the representative of such a property, he has expressed a wish to see us both as soon as possible. Now, my opinion is, as there is nothing of any consequence to detain us here at present, except partridge-shooting, that we take counsel with

him. Discuss your wine, and deliver your sentiments on the point."

"Sir," said I, "my ambition is not desirous of vaulting into the saddle of a dragoon; neither does my humility aspire to teach others, inasmuch as, had it any available counsel on hand, it would be required for home consumption. As you have surmised, I decline the profession of the law, because, in my opinion, it would as well suit a gentleman to act as its agent in a jugular as a judicial capacity. In the affair of the knife, were I compelled to live by blood, I should certainly decline becoming a butcher of men. My wish is to see the world like all of my age and character; and I do not feel any repugnance to uncle Tom being my banker. He means, of course, to equip the cavalier he destines for his spurs in a style befitting the honours to which he will succeed. Let us seek this knight of the ruby countenance; you are aware of his whereabouts?"

"He is in town," said my father, "for no reason that I can comprehend, but that the

cookery is better there than elsewhere. I wonder the old glutton isn't ashamed of eating and drinking as he does. What say you—we can manage another bottle of port?"

We found mine uncle at Jordan's, where my father joined him, and I went to my old quarters in Bond Street. It was the season when there is nobody in London, especially at Long's; and as, like Alexander Selkirk, I have never been able to discover the charms of solitude, the coffee-room, for want of other society, became populous with blue devils.

The master and his head-waiters were, of course, too fashionable to be in town, so that the honours were discharged by the dissipated little serving-man, introduced to the reader in an early chapter. Having dined with Mr. Longueville, as men are seldom dined in the metropolis during the off-months, I sought my couch somewhere towards midnight; and, according to custom, was waylaid by the fellow with the fiery face, who had a "lovely bottle of iced punch," as usual, in his hand.

"Where is Mr. J.?" I asked; for it oc-

curred to me at the moment that I had won from him on the Leger—"is he in London?"

"He left town a month ago, for his seat—in the Bench, sir."

"Impossible! I saw him at Doncaster last week."

"No reason you might not have met him in China, sir; a day-rule, like a pistol, is a passport from this world to the next, sir."

As I sat at breakfast on the following morning, I was surprised by a visit from an attorney whom I had once or twice employed on matters of finance, and who has since achieved more notoriety than reputation. The purpose of it, too, by no means served to abate my astonishment, being to borrow £10 for an occasion that admitted of no delay.

"It is for a young nobleman," said he, "a client of mine, that I have great expectations from; but who is, at this moment, without a shilling for his immediate exigencies, and I have not so much money in the house."

I gave him the sum he asked, and soon afterwards departed for Westminster Bridge,

and, at the end of two miles, reached a flight of the tallest brick walls it had been my fortune to encounter. Within was that retreat for fashionables requiring temporary retirement, with which I had not previously formed an acquaintance. The opportunity for such an introduction, coupled with a faint idea that it was just possible J—— might propose some prospective settlement of our Doncaster wager, induced my visit to the King's Bench.

The hall of entrance (which very much resembled the *penetralia* of a watch-house) was occupied by some of the least attractive persons I had before met with. One of these, modelled after O'Blunderbore in "Jack the Giant-killer," inquired, in a voice like the cough of an earthquake, "who I was pleased to want?" Having notified my requirement, a ghostly figure, in what was once a lady's dimity dressing-gown, and the begrimed *débris* of a dismal white hat, offered his services to find out the gentleman.

"He's either in his own room," he solilo-

quized, "or my lord's, or in the coffee-room, or the racket-ground, or cutting out Sir Charles's cocks, or bottling Captain O'Flanagan's whisky, or sorting the vegetables for Mr. Macgillicuddy's cock-aleekee, or trying the key-bugle that young Squire ——"

"Time don't hang heavy on people's hands here," I remarked, striding after my guide through groups whose costume and bearing would have honoured a Roman saturnalia, and stinks, rank and villanous beyond the comprehension of noses in a state of freedom.

"There ain't much time to spare," replied my *cicerone*, "where no gentleman is sober more than a couple of hours after he rises ; but there's Mr. J—— and his lordship coming out of the whistling-shop."

As he spoke, he pointed to a brace of gentlemen in velveteen shooting-jackets, having caps stuck on the sides of their heads, and meerschaums in their mouths, reeking like kitchen-chimneys.

"Holloa ! Marston," cried J—— as soon as he recognized me ; "what have you come

here for ? not to lodge, I hope—only a visiter, eh ? Motives of philosophical contemplation, eh ? Well, you must dine with us, to recruit your spirits, after the solemn scenes you will witness : let me introduce you to my friend.”

To my amazement, this friend was that very nobleman to relieve whose pressing wants I had but just advanced ten pounds to my man of law.

“This ornament of the peerage,” continued J——, “does the ‘tuck-out’ to-day ; for a plain feeder you’ll find his spread by no means despicable — one dish and a single species of wet—but each good of its kind. Come, it’s half-past one, and we go to trough at two ; sorrow is hungry as well as thirsty ; therefore we dine early.”

After examining the objects of curiosity below stairs, we proceeded to the apartment of the host : it was a chamber remarkable for simplicity of design and finish, with a set of rusty iron bars for a fire-stove, and white-washed walls. As a contrast to these, however,

there were massive gilt chairs, of the style of Louis XIV., a little mutilated as to their limbs; rosewood cabinets; satin sofas and loungers; a bear chained to the leg of a side-board, and a colossal Norway owl roosting on the foot-board of a French bedstead.

The peer did the honours with the ease of a man of the world. He was very young, and evidently not over-wise; but his manners were courteous, though careless. As we entered, a valet was making preparations for dinner. The table was clothed with damask, plate, china, and choice glass; while the swanlike necks that peeped above a little glacier announced the description of the liquor designed for our refreshment. The door was hardly closed when a knock was heard at it.

“Ke—ke—come in,” cried the noble, who was affected with a slight impediment of speech; “bailiff or beelzebub—keck—come in.”

The latch was raised, and a personage entered who looked as if the lord had antici-

pated his visiter. He was club-footed, and as black as a soot-bag.

“What d’ye want, snowball — keck?” asked the host.

“That ’ere sixteen shillin for coals,” said the gentleman in black.

“No money for ye—keck,” was the reply.

“Won’t stir a toe without it,” was the rejoinder.

“Then stay there—keck—and be d—d—keck ; but no, no. (Here the peer applied a scented cambric to his nose.) I say, friend, help yourself, and bolt. There’s a copper coal-scuttle worth a crown—and keck—keck, perhaps, you’ve a taste in zoology—there’s a bear may suit you, but—keck—he’s not so portable as the owl ; take the chancellor—keck—keck—and ‘pop’ him : he’ll fetch all the money.” The fellow stumped across the room, and, having hung the scuttle on one arm, and perched the owl on the other, closed the door behind him, and departed.

Our one dish was a silver tureen of turtle, containing enough for a company of French

falconers, and champagne, both sparkling and still. Depend upon it, the only worthy treatment of champagne is never to associate it with any baser liquid. Having dined, our souls grew supple, and the master of the feast began to speak out—as well as he could.

“Sir,” said he to me, “though I never before had the honour to meet you, I—keck—respect you for my friend’s sake, and—keck—keck—because you never leave any wine in your glass. They say this is a difficult world to live in; don’t believe them, sir—keck—they lie.

“I was born to misfortune, the eldest son of an earl, and never had a penny in my life but what I earned—keck—by my own industry. I’m but twenty-one—during the last two years have cleared the discount market of *six hundred thousand pounds*, and should now be in parliament—keck—keck—instead of the bench, had not the writ for my borough issued the day before I was of age. I’m rather poor just at present, but—keck—not quite destitute: here are three thousand

pounds in small notes, and there are a few big ones where they came from.

“ My plan is never to allow a chance to pass whereby a guinea—keck—may be earned. Here’s a flimsy I screwed out of a lawyer this morning—keck (producing my own ten-pound note): need any one despair after that? For my part, I should despise a man who was content with merely *living* upon nothing—keck—keck—keck—he ought to put by something handsome besides.”

In this strain of liberal philosophy the conversation was kept up, relieved by anecdotes and incidents arising out of the locality of the *symposium*. Among other memorable matters, allusion was made to a pair of eccentrics who had been recent companions of the honourable order of benchers. As J—— was *au fait* to every thing, I questioned him upon a point mooted a good deal out of doors at the time, namely, whether they were the real delinquents (they had undergone some six months’ imprisonment for an aggravated assault), or whether other parties, to whom it

was attributed, had not done the actual battery.

“Neither one or the other of ’em,” said the Irishman, in his native phrase, “had act or part in it: the peer, I believe, was present, but he never struck a blow; and as for the gallant captain, to my knowledge he was, at the moment charged in the indictment, intent on procuring an article of *virtù* for his museum. We had been surveying it together but a few days before the row, and it occurred to me there was a want of marble — and so I told him. The result was, that on the particular hour wherein it was sworn he whacked a guardian of the night, in the neighbourhood of Twickenham, he was peaceably stealing a tombstone out of Petersham churchyard.”

While with virtuous indignation we were denouncing the laws which thus worked the injury of unoffending citizens, it was announced that the hour for locking-out had arrived; whereupon I took a hurried leave of my suffering friends, one of whom was illuminating a choice “Havannah” of Hudson’s

most ancient stock, while the other, filling a bumper that sparkled as with molten diamonds, carolled—

“ The wine-cup’s the heart of a system,
Whence flows an elixir divine :
Have the ripest of lips, when we’ve kiss’d ’em,
A flavour as rich as the vine ?

Warm blushes and smiles are delicious,
A magic that few can escape ;
But dimples and glances are vicious :
Be ours the ripe bloom of the grape.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE WIFE, A TALE.

A legend of a lady — Society at home and abroad — The “bodkin” of a Richmond return — A palaver on things in general, and women in especial — The story of the wife and widow bewitched — A forecastle yarn.

“ If you know
That I do frown on men, and hug them hard,
And often scandal them; or if you know
That I profess myself in banquetting
To all the rout—then hold me dangerous.”

Julius Cæsar.

“ If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage—send me word to-morrow.”

Romeo and Juliet.

“ For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints.”

Measure for Measure.

CHAPTER XV.

The day following that with which the last chapter concluded, B—— C—— met me, and, having requested that I would join him and (I suppose it must out) — a lady, for a quiet day at Richmond, I said “done” to the proposition, a previous arrangement to dine with my two respectable relatives at Jordan’s notwithstanding.

Of course, I had some important excuse to plead in apology. The Archbishop of T—— insisted on my joining his eldest born, my Oriel chum, at an archiepiscopal spread on that particular evening; or there was some young gentleman, with claims on my humanity, who required my presence to give a fla-

vour to his barley-water. In short, I despatched them a fable of some sort, though I cannot at this moment recall the true one.

When people used to talk of spending a quiet day at Richmond, they meant, and I suppose it is pretty much the same still, a three hours' dinner, followed by a two hours' symposium at the "Star and Garter." Let the reader imagine that the present instance was no exception to the rule. I wish he could also imagine who played the lady's part—I was going to say *character*, but I don't like to take liberties with terms. *Our* lass of Richmond Hill was Caroline.

My presence called no additional hue into cheeks that, however coloured with health, were evidently unmoved by the fear of human opinion, for the wildfire gaiety of her conversation was as unchecked as ever. Her demeanour towards me was that strange medley of confidential intimacy bordering upon licentiousness, mingled with abrupt intervals of frozen courtesy, which marks the carriage of women who, in the drama of life, "assume a

virtue though they have it not," in the presence of cavaliers standing in the relation of past and present to their affections.

She played out her part with a delicacy of acting worthy a better purpose. C—— was obviously over head and ears in love, and either did not or could not see any thing that might interfere with his *amour propre*, or his passion. That Caroline was strongly linked to him there was no reason to doubt; that she either had abandoned, or would abandon, Ridsdale for him was equally clear; but that he had won her heart — that well of tenderness which, in woman, whatever her nature or character, gushes forth at the touch of the true enchanter—I saw good cause for doubting.

How was this? He was one of the handsomest—most polished—most popular men of his day, and his devotion to her was like a relic of the love chivalry of the olden ages. Was it her instinct that detected, beneath brilliant manners and ingenuous looks, the native meanness which foul fortunes foster into rank luxuriance, or that unfathomable

sympathy which binds, in soul and body, the daughter of dishonour, to the spirit, however steeped in vice and crime, that spurns the sordid and the base?

Whatever the cause, I felt the bonds she wore were those which might be easily shaken off; for, as we drove to town, under the witching light of a full harvest-moon, the tone and tendency of her conversation betrayed no sign of the emotion the lover feels in "the dangerous stillness of that hour." There was no lack, however, of the outward shows of passion, but they were but such as the prodigal wooer of either sex lavishes from the sympathies of the moment, of time, and place, or ulterior design.

I had sufficient leisure to moralize, like Touchstone, on the "par'lous times," and my reflections imbibed, from the acting before me, no little dislike of the adventurous pursuit of pleasure. I saw them frequently together afterwards, and each meeting corroborated my opinion of the lukewarmness of Caroline to her new lover. In despite of the liberal "means

and appliances" by which he sought, as though aware of the fact of her indifference, to bind her with golden fetters to his love, she left him, without quarrel or rupture, one sunny morning, for the gaieties of the French capital.

Many, doubtless, were the vicissitudes through which this second Sesostris passed about this period; but what will not a cold heart and quick head execute for self? Paris affords, by its peculiar social construction, a yet wider scope than London for the speculations of the adventurer. I do not mean to impugn the catholic severity of the morals of large portions of its population, when I state that matrimony is by no means, as in London, the only key by which its *portes cochères* are opened to the respectable classes. Reputable families do not disdain to visit Madame Chose, because Monsieur is not legitimately her mate. If couples live together decently, *tout comme les mariés*, a great portion of the good-natured flock to their *soirées* with no less eagerness than to

those of their more tightly-tied friends and acquaintance. Whatever *le bon prêtre* or *monsieur le maire* may say to such arrangements, one of their consequences has not escaped my cognizance. In no city are there more of those who, having once sinned, abjure their fault, and pass blamelessly through the remainder of life, than in the metropolis of France.

At an assembly of this kind, where the hostess was more tolerant than select, Caroline's splendid person and unquenchable gaiety captivated the eyes or the heart of a millionaire, a banker whose connexions, if not so European as Rothchild's, were equally safe. This gentleman, who was declining into the vale of years, it may be presumed, thought it fortunate enough, on any terms, to be admitted to Caroline's favour, and, rejected as a lover, he became her husband.

I am not aware that C—— renewed his visits to his former mistress on any of his excursions to Paris during the lifetime of her *caro sposo*. They must, however, have met,

for she frequented every place of amusement, and her house was a favourite resort of the English loungers. It is certain that, shortly after her secession, he entered largely into turf speculations, in which he was unsuccessful, and became very heavily involved. To extricate himself was no easy matter. When the state of a man's finances compel him to expedients for the preservation of his credit or his freedom, the chances are that he descends rapidly in the scale of moral delicacy.

While he was thus labouring in the paths of pleasure under difficulties, a thousand times more perplexing than ever attend the honourable struggles of the man of business, the French banker died, leaving Caroline well jointured. The widow wore her weeds briefly and becomingly, and the rumour of her wealth and comeliness drew C—— once more to her side. Again she returned to England, and lived under his protection. They had a small house and establishment in the vicinity of Hyde Park, where a sporting circle was soon formed. C—— betted very heavily, and on

the Derby of that year lost infinitely more than he could meet.

As a last resource, this scion of a noble house besought his mistress in marriage, and she refused him ! His nature recoiled—his reason fell at such degradation—and those who had seen him in lusty health and spirits to-day learnt, ere the morrow's sports began, that he had died—his blood upon his own head ! On his return from Epsom, C—— threw himself upon a sofa, and, having placed a napkin under his head, blew out his brains. St. James's, as with one voice, bewailed the fate of the suicide—the man whose spirit could not brook the postponement of a gambling debt, but the rather would have paid it out of the wages of vice. But was he not “an honourable man ? ”

The episode of our aristocratic cadet's decline and fall may be supposed to fill up the action of the narrative from the date of the departure from Richmond till the arrival in London. I hope, indeed, it has occupied the reader's time more to his satisfaction than the

drive up did mine. Sterne makes my Uncle Toby say he couldn't wish the devil himself a certain pain to which he (Uncle Toby) was liable. Satan is no favourite of mine, but, unless he falls another degree in my estimation, I cannot imprecate upon him so terrible a judgment as that he be condemned to enact bodkin to a sweethearting party on a moonlight night.

The journey gave me a good idea of eternity; and when I jumped out of B——C——'s barouche at the end of St. James's Street, I felt as much released as if I had escaped from Hades. Being really in need of a restorative, I turned into Jordan's, and, making my way to Mr. Longueville's apartments, there discovered a party of three, beleaguering a round table furnished for the gods. The windows were open—gauze blinds, like snow-wreaths, waving in festoons across them. Lamps shed silver light upon tall flasks, plumed pines, and tiny icebergs, relished with luscious fruits and essences of angelic flavour.

It was not till I had washed down a pound

of *glace à la vanille* with a goblet of unimpeachable Bourdeaux, that I was enabled to offer courtesies to my relatives, and reconnoitre the third party. The triumvirate was little affected by my entrance: the host, indeed, muttered something about “debauched Richmond dinners;”—the most unkindest cut, inasmuch as, if ever I had crowned a virtuous meal with an evening of self-denial, it had been that from which I was then suffering. An argument that all appeared to take a false view of, from the obstinacy with which each defined his individual sentiment, was in full fight.

“Tom,” said my father, “you’re as perverse as Joe Miller’s pigs—it’s enough to whisper the right road to ensure your taking the wrong.”

“Ned,” retorted the avuncular, “I’ve practised as I preach; it isn’t everybody whose life furnishes a commentary on his opinions. I never perpetrated matrimony—had I done so I should have sought a partner beyond the haunts of fashion. You took a town-bred lady to your bosom, and the earnestness with

which you advocate the practice is too complimentary to my sister to allow me to question its convenience."

Here was a slap through the weasand!—it fairly knocked the logic out of my father's head, as it seemed to knock the breath out of his lungs.

The third party, who did the bodkin in *this* case, deeming it prudent to give a more amicable turn to the conversation, now lifted up his voice, and thus bespake his notion of the matter in dispute:—

"As Father O'Leary said about purgatory," he began, "a good deal may be urged on both sides of the present proposition. I married a native of May Fair, who brought me as little vexation as could be expected with a wife, by any reasonable man. To be sure, since she bestowed her hand upon me, I've not been out of commission more than a month in three years, and my stations have all been foreign. My father married a rural *belle*, and she absconded with the Duke of ——, at which he was very wretched, and so he carried off the

duke's wife, who was brought up in —— palace, and she continues with him to the present hour, which don't seem to contribute much more to his happiness. They say, indeed, she did at home what her predecessor did abroad—at all events, neither town nor country agreed with him.

“My dear Longueville, if your nephew must perpetrate the connubial, it strikes me he will throw as punters at hazard always do—with precious long odds against him. However, you may make yourself easy about his fortunes that way, as it appears to me. He knows how to take care of himself (I was depositing a wedge of pineapple within my jaws at the moment), which, with a lively reliance upon luck, is the best way to make fair weather of it, married or single.”

From these bits of oratory, it became manifest that the night's debate had turned upon the altering of my condition in the affairs of hymeneals; as also that both my governors—my sire by adoption as well as my sire by grace—were deeply interested in the discussion.

No sooner had the naval philosopher brought his yarn to an end, than Uncle Tom, who liked better to hear himself talk than any one else (this, however, was not one of his *exclusive* peculiarities), resumed the thread of the discourse.

“You may argue till doomsday, but you can’t persuade me that Hyde would not run a better chance of being happy—that is, I should say, of being less miserable—did he select a bride who had only looked on the decent order of life, rather than one who had contemplated the world turned inside out.”

“Why don’t you put your vocabulary into the decent order you speak of?” cried my father, still smarting from the pink he had received in the conjugal: “what’s the use in spouting fustian upon stilts?”

“Gentle demeanour,” continued Uncle Tom, not noticing the interruption, “soft speech, meek eyes, cheeks whose eloquence is a blush—these denote the presence of modesty, virtue, and constancy in woman; no one gainsays

that, I suppose? Can *he* choose wrong who selects a partner thus endowed?"

"You might form as good a notion of a ship's bottom from the set of her to'-gallant sails," cried the sailor, "as of a girl by the cut of her jib : it's at the figure-head that she always hoists false colours. I'd rather see a hand of mine sheer off with a sweetheart as brazen as a bo'sun's mate, than laid alongside one of your demure, dainty, downcast donnas. I've a horror of soft-spoken, meek-looking ladies, and I'll tell you the reason.

"Some years ago, I had the —— frigate, then stationed in the North Seas, and her people were, by many degrees, the finest body of men ever under my command. Some of them were models of human symmetry ; a man named Heslop, one of my gig's crew, being the Corypheus of this band of blue-jacket Apollos.

"After knocking about in all sorts of weather for eighteen months, we were ordered home to be paid off; and I need not tell you it was

'up stick' in earnest, the moment the welcome word was passed. A few mornings after we had commenced running westward, I was pacing my deck, musing, it may be, somewhat seriously; because, as Byron says—

“ ‘The approach of home, to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires—’

when the cry of ‘a man overboard!’ roused me from my reverie, and I saw Heslop struggling in the foam the flying vessel was dashing from her bows. The life-buoy was cut away in an instant, and in another the strong swimmer had placed himself upon it. ‘Lower away the boats,’ shouted the officers of the watch; but the heavy weather of the previous week had stove in our quarter boats, and when they succeeded in getting the cutter over the side, she was instantly disabled.

“Already we had left the poor fellow miles astern, every glass in the ship fixed despairingly upon him. There he sat, amid the hell of waters, waving his cap; while his mess-

mates yelled in the very hopelessness of their agony. We watched him till he was lost beyond the horizon : what must have been his feelings at that hour—and for hours—probably days after? Oh ! how many deaths did that quick tenant of the grave die !

“ We reached Spithead shortly after, and even the memory of that awful scene had become lost to my recollection, when it was thus recalled. As usual, no sooner was the frigate in her berth, than we were surrounded by shoals of women, each of whom, on giving the name of her husband, was passed on deck.

“ I was amusing myself with the various ways in which Jack did the amiable and gallant, when I observed the master-at-arms, whose duty it was to pass the women, suddenly stop a fair, fragile-looking girl. She was a *blonde*, with dovelike eyes, and a voice ‘soft as the sweet south.’ ‘I want Tom Heslop,’ she remonstrated, like an angel practising recitative.

“ The stout master-at-arms turned to the lieutenant of the watch, and said—

“ ‘Sir, I can’t tell her that poor Tom has lost the number of his mess : it sticks in my throat like a marlinspike.’

“The girl repeated her demand for admittance more urgently, and the officer, with deep emotion, shortly told the story of her husband’s fate. The cherub-form’d widow of Tom Heslop paused, as if puzzled by the intelligence ; the dilemma, however, was soon disposed of. Shoving aside the marines that guarded the side, she made her way towards the gangs of men that thronged the waist, exclaiming :

“ ‘Is there never a hand on the books that will bear up for a disrated widder ? Here I am, hearty, healthy, sixteen, and without encumbrance : who’s the first to bid ?’

“Thus spake the relict of Tom Heslop, and the next moment she disappeared into the orlop deck, like Don Juan in the play, *surrounded by blue flames.*”

END OF VOL II.

LONDON:
F. SHOBERL, JUN., 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET,
PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT.





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